Screen
The Journal of the Society for
Education in Film and Television
Spring/Summer 1973
Special Double Issue

Cinema Semiotics and the Work of Christian Metz

Screen

Christian Metz Current Problems in Film Theory
Christian Metz Methodological Propositions for the Analysis of Film
Tzvetan Todorov Semiotics
Julia Kristeva The Semiotic Activity
Stephen Heath Cinema/Cinetext/Text
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Editorial

An advertisement in the *International Film Guide* 1973 informs us that the Teachers College Press is preparing an English translation of Jean Mitry's *Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma*. One obviously welcomes this undertaking, as Mitry's work contains many extremely useful insights and is largely unknown in this country, but one cannot help feeling a little apprehensive. After all, Jean Mitry's mammoth work, published in two volumes (Vol 1 in 1963; Vol 2 in 1965) represents a summing up, the concluding stage (as Metz calls it) of a particular history of thought about the cinema. Mitry's film-philosophy put a full stop after the pre-history of film theory. This is not to say that one has to sweep aside every word by Balasz, Arnheim or Bazin, by Kuleshov, Pudovkin or Eisenstein. On the contrary, many concepts developed by these writers and many of their ideas (on condition that one re-defines and re-locates them) are still of immense value. However with the introduction of Mitry's work into Anglo-Saxon film criticism, this concluding stage could be interpreted as a major breakthrough and spark off a whole series of texts à-la-Mitry, a rather dismal prospect. The present issue of *Screen* is in part an attempt to help counter such a development.

The most important feature of Christian Metz's work is that it establishes a break in the history of ideas relating to the object film. Up to the time of Metz's intervention (about 1964) film/cinema had been used as an excuse to talk about something else, usually the moral views, the political beliefs and other prejudices of the critic himself. As film had never been regarded as a text, ie as the question of pertinence had never been asked with regard to the cinematic discourse, individual critics assumed that no knowledge was required other than the 'general culture' of the 'well-educated' gentleman/woman. Attempts to change this situation had been in terms of efforts to turn cinema into what it is not (yet): source material for the literary critic, sociologist, psychologist, historian, economist, moral philosopher. It always helps to know what one is dealing with *before* trying to integrate it into a particular discipline. No wonder that historians have very little idea of what attitude they should adopt vis-a-vis the 'film-as-document'; how are they to determine the validity of a text when they do not know how it functions? How can the source-value (if such a thing exists) of a text be assessed without this knowledge?

What is required first of all, if the semiology of film is to become a science, is a precise description of the object of cinesemiotics. Moreover, since Kant we know that the object of a science is not a given but that it has to be constructed. As Althusser pointed out

in relation to psychoanalysis (*Freud and Lacan* in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London 1971):

> If psychoanalysis is a science because it is the science of a distinct object, it is also a science with the structure of all sciences: it has a *theory* and a *technique* (method) that makes possible the knowledge and transformation of its object in a specific *practice*. As in every authentically constituted science, the practice is not the absolute of the science but a theoretically subordinate moment; the moment in which the theory, having become method (technique) comes into theoretical contact (knowledge) or practical contact (cure) with its specific object (the unconscious) (p 184).

The theory of film does not yet exist – hence the difficulties in establishing the object – and the methods of study are at present borrowed from the study of other types of discourse, mainly the verbal discourse and the discourse of the unconscious as described by Freud. However, the scientific study of verbal discourse, ie Poetics, is itself still only a project, relying heavily on the concepts elaborated in the scientific study of the systems of verbal language (*langue*) ie Linguistics.

Metz, by trying to describe the system of relations constituting the cinematic discourse, is preparing the way (and progressing as he does so) towards establishing a specific object of study (see his remarks concerning the multiple specificity of the cinematic discourse) and, consequently, towards a semiology of film. This new perspective requires a re-scanning of the pre-history of film theory, in order to determine which elements can be considered to be still contributing to film knowledge (a process that can be seen at work in Metz's review of Mitry's book). Semiology, as the theory of the production of meaning in texts, will have to provide the theoretical framework for any examination/description of film texts; and as linguistics is at present the most advanced branch (and likely to remain so) of semiology, the film semiologist will have to lean heavily on those aspects of the conceptual apparatus of that discipline which are also applicable in other branches of semiology. However, it is early days yet, too early in any case to talk about film semiologists. As Metz puts it:

> the only principle of pertinence capable of defining at the present time the semiology of film – apart from the fact that it is concerned with the filmic fact rather than the cinematic fact – is the will to treat films as texts, as units of discourse. Thus putting oneself under the obligation to look for the different *systems* (whether or not they be codes) which structure the texts and are implicit in them. When one says that semiology studies the *form* of the films, one must keep in mind that form is not the opposite of content, as there is a form of content, just as

 important as the form of the signifier. (*Langage et Cinéma*, p 14).

The texts presented in this issue have been selected/commissioned for the following reasons:

1 At the time of going to press, none of Metz's writings are widely available in the English language. Although Praeger, the American publisher, is bringing out a translation of the first volume of Metz's essays, it would be wrong for *Screen* to assume that its readers will have a copy of that translation within easy reach while reading this journal. Therefore, long and elaborate readings of Metz's two first books (the third one has only just now appeared), with a multitude of quotations, extracts and schematisations of his arguments have been included. In this way, the issue provides a series of readings of Metz which do not presuppose a detailed knowledge of the original texts.

2 As was indicated earlier, by far the most important aspect of Metz's writing resides in his attempts to found a semiology of the cinema. In other words, the overall title for his work could be given as ' towards a semiology of film ', with the emphasis on the ideas of orientation and movement contained in the term ' towards '. This also means that in the last ten years or so, Metz has frequently altered, revised or extended certain aspects of his nascent theory, as becomes evident from his own comments (in the form of footnotes added to the texts at a later stage). This state of flux made it necessary to stress the more general aspects of his endeavour, the basic assumptions, concepts and arguments at work in his texts, rather than, eg, to reprint his detailed analysis of one single code in one single film (*Adieu Philippine*) or one single problem (such as punctuation in the cinema, an analysis which raises rather more questions than it answers and which is unlikely to convince anyone of the absolute necessity of undertaking a semiology of film).

3. This issue is intended primarily as an introduction to cinesemiotics and a basis for further work in this field, rather than as a comprehensive and systematic study of Metz's writing on the cinema. As Metz is the only one who has worked consistently on the problem of cinesemiotics, his essays must be regarded as founding texts providing the framework for any future study. This perspective has led to the inclusion of essays which demonstrate the area of thought into which Metz made his intervention (ie the tradition culminating in the work of Jean Mitry), as well as the problems his interventions raise (and sometimes fail to solve) in respect to contemporary film studies (see M Cegarra and *Cinéthique's* collective text). The insertion of Metz's review of Mitry in this issue of *Screen* has one further advantage: whereas the review provides an introduction to the work of this most influential film philosopher (co-founder with Franju and Langlois of the Cinémathèque Française in 1936, and professor at the Institut des Hautes

Etudes Cinématographiques – IDHEC – since 1936) the texts surrounding it provide a thorough critique of Mitry's position.

4. Anticipating some of the criticisms and negative gut reactions these texts may provoke, it has been decided to include a text by Julia Kristeva. Her essay is part of the discourse which simultaneously determines, criticises and validates Metz's methods. From Kristeva's remarks about the nature and the status of the semiotic activity, one can see that this science not only presents a rigorous theoretical framework, but that it constantly questions its own discourse in its very formation: being the science of signification, its own discourse necessarily forms part of its object. It is hoped that those who might feel tempted to dismiss semiological work merely because semiology does not yet fully exist (see Todorov's doubts concerning some of the premises of semiology and Kristeva's answer by displacing the object of study), will, by reading Kristeva as well as Metz and Todorov, come to grasp the nature – scientific as well as political – of the problems involved. As François Wahl points out in the *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des Sciences du Langage* (p 452): ' All semiology aims at being a theory of signifying systems. Semanalysis (Kristeva's project) on the other hand directs itself towards the very production of these systems in *langue* and towards their history in relation to the history of the action of society. It can therefore consider itself as a science of meaning (and consequently of knowledge) in its material conditions and development. It thereby lays the foundations of a *materialist gnosiology* (ie a materialist theory of knowledge)'.

Another reason why Kristeva's text can be regarded as determining Metz's discourse, is that the work of Christian Metz takes a place within textual semiotics, and the position of Kristeva's work within that network of texts can be deduced from Roland Barthes' comments:

> I think that really the only acceptable model of science is that of Marxist science such as it has been elucidated by Althusser in his studies of Marx, the ' epistemological break ' that he defines with regard to Marx making apparent *the* science of today and disengaging science from ideology. Clearly it is in that direction that reference must be made to science, but I am not sure, of course, that semiology is at the moment in a position to do that, except perhaps in the work of Julia Kristeva (from an interview in *Signs of the Times – Introductory Readings in Textual Semiotics*, Granta, Cambridge 1972, p 43).

Even though Metz never explicitly refers to the work of Kristeva, *all* contemporary texts on semiotics, especially when produced in France, have her work as co-text, as *hors-texte*. Moreover, the status of her work in this field, as witnessed by Barthes' assessment, turns her work into a kind of reference-text (although Metz's intervention pre-dates Kristeva's by about three years, most of

 their important work is strictly contemporaneous).

Finally, we would have liked to include in this issue some examination of the reasons why semiology is not yet being practised very actively in this country, in spite of the fact that most of the basic texts are available in English (except the work of Derrida, Greimas and a few others). However, this issue being bulky enough as it is, we would like to refer our readers to Colin McCabe's illuminating essay in *Signs of the Times*, a collection of texts which deserves republication and wide dissemination in paperback format.

PAUL WILLEMEN

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Stephen Heath

The various pieces assembled in this issue of *Screen* differ from one another at many points – a result not only of theoretical disagreement but also, more simply, of the diverse contexts in which they were written. Reading them together does, however, reveal a central, shared emphasis: they all suggest that there is a crucial and urgent necessity to finish with the flow of (ideologically complicit) drivel that currently and massively passes as 'film-criticism' and that such a refusal demands the development of a constant process of theoretical reflection.

It is the need for such a development which explains why this emphasis is made by these various pieces, even though it may be in terms of certain doubts or criticisms, through a consideration of semiology and the elaboration of a semiology of film. Over the last ten or fifteen years semiology has been constructed in France (and elsewhere) precisely as the theoretical discourse capable of effecting the radical calling into question of conventional modes of thinking, with their notions of 'source', 'origin', 'centre', 'expression', 'representation', 'full subject' and so on, in such a way as to grasp, in an attention to the process of signification, the construction of sense and subject.

In its development in the work of a Julia Kristeva, semiology is conceived as critical science, a practice perpetually displacing its object and itself in a theoretical activity that operates a ceaseless destruction of the whole ideology of representation. ('Such a conception of semiotics in no sense implies a relativism or an agnostic scepticism. It does, on the other hand, rejoin the scientific practice of Marx in so far as it challenges an absolute system (including the scientific system), but retains scientific procedure, that is, the process of the elaboration of models accompanied by the theory that underlies these models. Developing in the constant to-and-fro between the two, but also recessively in relation to them – thus from the standpoint of the adoption of a definite position in the ongoing social practice – such a mode of thinking brings to the fore that "epistemological break" introduced by Marx.' *Semeiotikè*, Paris, 1969, p 32.)

A consideration of semiology in relation to the particular signifying practice of cinema passes inevitably through reference to the work of Christian Metz. To say this is to acknowledge at once the pioneering nature of that work and its importance; pioneering in so far as it is with Metz's work that is begun the elaboration of a semiology of film, important not merely because of this primacy

10 but also because of the fruitfulness of the models and analyses constructed and tested in the course of that elaboration. This issue of *Screen* thus offers an introduction to film semiology in a presentation of Metz's work and of the context of debate which that work has provoked. It may not be amiss perhaps to anticipate a little that presentation and mark here one or two emphases which are there everywhere in evidence, indicating in this way certain elements that function generally in the recasting of the conception of cinema such as is described, in detail, in the essays which follow.

1. The elaboration of a semiology of film cannot, finally, be conceived simply as the development of a 'knowledge' limited to a particular and autonomous object of study. This is stressed by Metz to the degree to which he characterises film semiology as the *total* study of the filmic fact. Certainly, it may be necessary at a given stage in the process of the elaboration of such a semiology to limit sharply the focus of attention – this is notably and validly the case in Metz's definition of his work as the study of cinematic language — but this limitation is itself, ineluctably, in the problems it raises, a focus of attention and critical interrogation. Again, this can be seen in the way in which the question of specificity, the very point at which his limitation operates, becomes a crucial area of reflection in Metz's semiology and in the arguments it has occasioned – and is ceaselessly transgressed in so far as a semiology dealing with the particular cultural system of film inevitably encounters, in its disengagement of codes, other semiologies, encounters, in fact, the general enterprise of semiology as analysis of forms of social practice grasped as signifying systems, analysis that poses a theoretical reflection on the process(es) of signification and through that on the functioning of sense and its subject.

The (re-) insertion of semiology of film in this wider perspective of semiology as critical science does not – need it be said? – imply the discovery of some 'total discourse' (Metz's term) of the type spun out week after week by a film criticism that is written by the ideology whose films it sells (see with regard to this criticism the article by Charles Barr on 'Straw Dogs, A Clockwork Orange and the Critics', *Screen* v 13 n 2, Summer 1972, pp 17-31), but its articulation on a series of problems the setting in position of which works back at the level of the particular semiology on the conception at once of its object and of its own discourse, producing it in a fundamental gesture of auto-reflexivity. The criticisms formulated against *Langage et Cinéma* by the *Cinéthique* paper translated here are in one sense directed at a refusal by Metz to follow through the implications of this reinsertion and the consequent blocking of his semiology in the opposition descriptive/normative, an opposition that determines an inability to think the relations of the signifying practice of film and ideology and the question of the rôle of semiology in ideology.

2. The problem of 'realism' was the subect of a previous issue of

Screen (v 13 n 1, Spring 1972) but, in addition to referring the reader to the discussion included there, it may be worth giving in the present context Metz's stress on reality as significant realisation: 'What is called reality – that is, the sundry pro-filmic elements – is nothing other than a set of codes: the set of codes without which that reality would not be accessible or not be intelligible, so that one would not be able to say anything about it, not even that it is reality' (*Langage et Cinéma*, Paris, 1971, p 78). Such a stress does not, as Paul Willemen argues in the appendix to this introduction, involve some idea of the natural expressivity of the world (it does not rejoin Pasolini's idea of the world as the natural expression of God); on the contrary, it places semiology firmly within a Marxist perspective in emphasising the given 'reality' as the realisation of a social praxis, semiology then offering precisely an attention to the process of this realisation in its analysis of forms of social practice as signifying systems, its account of the intelligibility of 'reality'. 'Realism', in the naive sense in which it is still generally understood in connection with film, is simply the repetition of the forms of the ideological ('naturalised') representation of reality dominant in a particular society; in film, moreover, this 'realism' is bolstered by a whole ideology of the 'visual' which needs to be carefully and continually questioned (see the various discussions in the following articles of the concept of 'analogy' and its functioning in different kinds of discourse on cinema).

3. Semiological analysis involves an opposition to the 'organicism' typical of film criticism, which seeks to think film as organic unity in a homogenisation that, holding film in a mysterious individuality, refuses to grasp the process of its production as signifying system. Semiology opens out that process in its disengagement of the heterogeneity of codes at work in the structuration of film, providing thereby the possibility of understanding its specificity, its activity of combination or displacement, its contradictions, etc.

4. In calling into question the notion of the organic individual 'work', semiological analysis also operates a radical questioning of the 'author' and, under that, a radical dissociation of the subject – that 'dissolution of man' which Lévi-Strauss once defined as the aim of the semiological sciences. The subject is no longer assumed as full immediate presence, point of origin and source, but is grasped in his construction in the series of signifying systems, in a multiplicity of structures (taking 'structure' there as 'that which puts in place an experience for a subject whom it includes'), dispersed, in Foucault's words, in 'a plurality of possible positions and functions'. Such a recognition of dispersion does not admit a simple model of the type based on 'communication' and 'expression' with its reference to an 'expressing subject'; rather, it posits the need to chart a topology of the subject, in process in a movement of assumption and contradiction, over the instances

imposed by the set of systems. In this connection the necessity is defined for the analysis of the positions ideologically available in a given system for the imaginary constitution of the subject as direct source of expression, for his transposition as full subject, as point of origin (as 'author') and for the analysis – the rôle of psychoanalysis – of the production of the subject as ideological support.

5. These emphases cannot but work back on critical attitudes to cinema. At one level this is evidently the moment of the break with the habitual reflexes of film criticism; it becomes intensely unintelligent – though retaining a precise ideological complicity – to continue to embrace Warhol and Chabrol, x and y, in a cult of – untouchable – Cinema, to continue the valorisation of the cineast-author, of 'personal cinema' (the sequence of Pasolini's films shows clearly enough how such a 'personal expressivity' rejoins and confirms a cinema rooted in the repetition of the forms of a certain bourgeois ideology – *The Canterbury Tales* is exemplary in this respect), etc. More crucially, it suggests the possibility of thinking and recognising a practice of cinema based in a work on the orders of code in which it is caught, a reflective work on the activity of film. Such a cinema is not a 'consciously structured personal cinema' (the notion of person is precisely there in question) but an attention to forms, a practice that seeks to grasp the multiple processes of signification at work in film and the positions of the subject they decide. In this semiology and cinema come together in the construction of that theoretical reflection which it is the very purpose of this issue of *Screen* to begin to approach.

Appendix

Paul Willemen

'The traditional opposition between *langue* and *parole* can also be couched in terms of code and message, *the code* being the organisation which permits the building up of the message and with which one confronts each element of a message in order to disengage the sense from it'. . . . '*Langue* manifests its presence only through discourse, or, if you prefer, through acts of speech.' (A. Martinet, *Eléments de Linguistique Générale*, Paris 1967, p 25.)

Stephen Heath is referring to an essay I am preparing on the relations between filmic and cinematic codes. As the essay will be published in a future issue of *Screen*, it will suffice in this context to give a mere outline of my argument against Metz's notion of 'reality'.

If reality is coded, then reality is a *langue and* a discourse. Reality would then be an act of speech. If Metz situates the subject of this speech in the perceiving subject (as he surely wouldn't imitate Pasolini and designate this subject as a God), he fails to allow that there is a concrete reality, measurable and tangible,

remaining constant no matter how different structuring acts of perception transform or deform it. To make the individual consciousness into the supreme arbiter of reality amounts to phenomenologism. There should be a distinction made between ' reality ' and ' whatever is perceived as reality by members of a particular cultural group or sub-group at a given moment in time '. An excavation in the Andes is a reality brought about by a social praxis, the Andes themselves are not. The Andes are a geological fact bearing the imprint of geological history, but this history is by no means the ' meaning ' of the Andes. They are a non-signifying reality. If they are used as a profilmic event, it is impossible to claim that they are already coded.

If the absence of meaning is not accepted as proof of absence of coding (as for instance in texts dealing with musical codes) then the final refutation of Metz's view must be that the Andes are not part of the plane of expression of a discourse (who would be ' expressing ' the Andes?) The Andes themselves cannot be situated within a paradigmatic nor within a syntagmatic set, they are not part of a system which derives it's meaning and function from its context and from elements which could be substituted for it. The reality of the Andes is not subject to a commutation test. Only the semantically very complex signification ' the Andes ' figures in language systems.

When we decode reality as ' reality ', we are simultaneously projecting and reading a code. This is the essential gesture of a particular ideology: we define reality by ' decoding ' it as meaning ' reality ', at the same time reading it in order to justify our definition, which in turn will justify our reading, and so on ad infinitum. Profilmic events should be divided into signifying reality and into non-signifying reality (eg on one level, a city is a signifying reality, a mountain range is not). Such a distinction is necessary if we are to escape all suspicion of theology. In the cinema however, non-signifying profilmic events, when filmed, are transformed through the application of cinematic codes (camera angle, lens, focus, framing, colour, etc . . .) into a signifying ' diegetic reality '. It is therefore necessary for the director to take into account this transformation, because *all* elements in the diegetic ' reality ' are signifying, every square inch of the screen-image is coded.

When Metz says that one would not be able to say anything about such a reality, not even that it is reality, he is quite correct: in order to speak about reality, one has to operate a number of segmentations, one has to ' cut out ' pieces of ' reality ' to make it fit the way our verbal language operates (in the cinema one ' sections ' the profilmic reality). To speak about reality presupposes a definition which is made possible only by the suppression of Reality.

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Tzvetan Todorov

Semiotics (or semiology) is the science of signs. Because of the primary role which verbal signs have always played, reflection on signs was for a long time merged with reflection on language. There is a semiotic theory implicit in the linguistic speculations that have come down to us from Antiquity – China and India, Greece and Rome. The Modistae of the Middle Ages also formulated ideas on language which have a bearing on semiotics [see Kristeva's essay p 29]. But it was not until Locke that the term 'semiotics' itself emerged. For the whole of this early period, semiotics was not distinguished from the general theory – or philosophy – of language.

Semiotics became an independent discipline with the work of the American philosopher Charles Sander Peirce (1839-1914). For him it was a frame of reference which embraced all other fields:

– 'It has never been in my power to study anything – whether it be mathematics, morals, metaphysics, gravitation, thermodynamics, optics, chemistry, comparative anatomy, astronomy, psychology, economy, history of science, whist, men and women, wine, meteorology – in any other way than with semiotics'.*

Consequently Peirce's writing on semiotics are as varied as the subjects listed, and he did not produce a *single* coherent work summing up the main lines of his doctrine. The result has for a long time been a certain lack of knowledge of his doctrines which persists up to the present – and they are all the more difficult to grasp since they changed from year to year.

The major originality of the Peircian system lies precisely in the definition which he gives to the sign. One of his formulations reads:

A sign, or Representamen, is a First which stands in a genuine triadic relation to a Second, called its Object, as to be capable of determining a Third, called its Interpretant, to assume the same triadic relation to its object in which it (the sign) stands itself to the same Object.

In order to understand this definition we have to bear in mind that for Peirce *all* human experience organised itself around three levels which he called: firstness, secondness and thirdness and which corresponded roughly to: the qualities known through the

* Quotes with an asterisk have been re-translated into English from the French text **Editorial note.**

 senses, the experience of effort, and signs. The sign in its turn was one of these three-term relationships: that which instigates the linking process, its object, and the effect produced by the sign or the *interpretant*.[1] In the more widely accepted sense, the interpretant is therefore the meaning of the sign; in a narrower sense it is the paradigmatic relationship between one sign and another: the interpretant is thus always also a sign which has its own interpretant and, in the case of the ' perfect ' sign, so on to infinity.

This process of conversion between the sign and the interpretant might be illustrated by the relationship which a word has with the terms which provide its dictionary definition – the synonym or paraphrase – all terms which themselves have definitions, always composed only of words.

– ' The sign is not a sign unless it can be translated into another sign in which it is more fully developed '.*

One has to take note of the fact that this concept is alien to any psychologism: the conversion of a sign into interpretant(s) is produced within the system of signs, not in the minds of their users. (Certain of Peirce's formulae should therefore, as he himself suggested, be discounted):

– ' my inserting of " upon a person " is a sop to Cerberus, because I despair of making my own broader conception understood '.

A second notable aspect of Peirce's semiotic work is his classification of the varieties of signs. We have already seen that the number three plays an important role (as does the number two in Saussure); the total number of varieties distinguished by Peirce is 66. Certain of his distinctions have been completely absorbed into current usage, as for instance the *type* and *token* or *legisign* and *sinsign* distinctions.[2]

Another of Peirce's distinctions which, though well-known, is usually inadequately interpreted is the *icon*, *index* and *symbol* distinction. These three levels of the sign correspond once again to the firstness, secondness and thirdness gradation and are defined as follows:

– ' I define an Icon as a sign which is determined by its dynamic object by virtue of its own internal nature. I define an Index as a sign determined by its dynamic object by virtue of being in *real* relation to it. I define a symbol as a sign determined by its dynamic object only in the sense that it will be so interpreted '.

The symbol refers back to something by force of a law – as is the case, for example with the words of language. The *index* is a sign which is in contiguity with the object denoted, for example the appearance of a symptom of disease, a drop in the barometer,

the arrow of a weathervane, the gesture of pointing. In *langue*, everything that derives from the deixis[3] is an index: for example, words like *I, you, here, now,* etc (these are therefore ' indexical symbols ').[4] Finally, the *icon* is a sign which exhibits the same quality or configuration of qualities as the object denoted: for example, a black spot for the colour black, onomatopeia, diagrams which reproduce relations between properties. Peirce subdivides the icon again into images, diagrams and metaphors. But clearly, the iconic relationship can never be assimilated (as it often is incorrectly) to that of a resemblance between two signifieds. (In rhetorical terms, the icon is a synecdoche rather than a metaphor – it can't be said for instance that the black spot *resembles* the colour black). Still less can the indexical relationship be assimilated to that of contiguity between two signifieds (contiguity in the index is between sign and referent, not between entities of the same nature). Peirce moreover expressly warned against such identification.

At more or less the same time but quite independently, semiology was predicted by Ferdinand de Saussure. He worked as a linguist, not as a philosopher and needed semiology as a context in which to integrate linguistics.

> *Langue* is a system of signs that express ideas, and is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of all these systems. A science that studies the life of signs within society is therefore conceivable; I shall call it semiology (from Greek semeion ' sign '). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it would be; but it has a right to existence, a place staked out in advance.

de Saussure's direct contribution to non-linguistic semiology is limited to these remarks, but they have played an important role; at the same time, his definitions of sign, signifier, and signified, although formulated with verbal language in mind, have drawn the attention of all semioticians.

A third source of modern semiotics is the work of the German philosopher Ernst Cassirer who in his monumental work *On the Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* clearly sets out the following principles: (1) The supra-instrumental role of language: it serves not to name a pre-existing reality, but to *articulate* and *conceptualise* it. This role of the symbolic – understood here in the wide sense of everything that produces sense[5] – is what distinguishes men from animals which have only reception and action systems (what Peirce would have called systems of firstness and secondness), and what earns man the name of *animal symbolicum*. (2) Verbal language is not alone in enjoying this privilege, it shares it with a series of other systems which together constitute the sphere of

the ' human ' – myth, religion, art, science, history. Each of these ' symbolic forms ' informs the ' world ' rather than imitates it. The merit of Cassirer's work is that he examined *the specific laws which govern symbolic systems and the way they differ from the rules of logic:* multiple meanings replace general concepts, representative figures replace classes; the reinforcement of ideas (through repetition, variation, etc) replaces proof . . . Nevertheless Cassirer is concerned much more with a philosophic project than with a scientific contribution.

A fourth source of modern semiotics is *logic.* Peirce himself had been a logician, but his ideas in this field did not have any great influence on the period. It is rather another line which needs to be followed, beginning with Frege (whose distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*[6] is of major importance for semiotics) and passes through Russell and Carnap: the latter constructed an ideal language which was soon to function as a model for semiotics. It was the American philosopher Charles Morris who introduced it to semiotics in the thirties. Morris formulated clearly a series of distinctions, for example between *designatum* and *denotatum:* ' A *designatum* is not a thing, but a kind of object or class of objects – and a class may have many members, or one member, or no members. The *denotata* are the members of the class. . . .'

He also distinguished between the *semantic, syntactic* and *pragmatic* dimensions of the sign: the semantic dimension being the relationship between signs and designata or denotata; the syntactic – the relationship between signs themselves; the pragmatic – the relationship between signs and their users. Morris' other ideas never achieved the same popularity.

Another effort towards the construction of semiotics needs to be noted – namely, Eric Buyssens' work *Le Langage et le Discours* (1943), which was inspired by the Saussurian categories. Basing himself on verbal language on the one hand, and various other semiological systems (traffic signs, etc) on the other, the author established a certain number of notions and distinctions (*seme* and *semic act, instrinsic* and *extrinsic semes, direct* and *substitutive semes*) which will not be dealt with here because they were not adopted by theoreticians. Their inspiration was resolutely functionalist: for Buyssens a system is organised by its own syntax. In the same period, the writings of all the major representatives of what is called ' structural linguistics ' (Sapir, Trubetskoy, Jakobson, Hjelmslev, Benveniste) took account of the semiological perspective and tried to specify the place of language within other sign systems.

The arts and literature drew particular attention from the first semioticians. In an essay entitled ' L'art comme fait sémiologique ' Jan Mukařovsky, one of the members of the Prague Linguistic Circle,[7] proposed that the study of the arts should become part of semiotics and tried to define the specificity of the aesthetic sign: as

an *autonomous* sign which acquires an importance in itself and not just as a mediator of signification. But alongside this aesthetic function which is common to all the arts, he saw another which the arts characterised by a ' subject ' (literature, painting, sculpture) possess and which is that of verbal language – namely, the *communicative function.* ' Works of Art " with a subject " (literature, painting, sclupture) have a second semiological function which is communicative '. Charles Morris defined the artistic sign from an opposition based on the icon: ' there are two principal classes of signs – those which are like what they denote (ie possess properties in common) and those which are not like what they denote. One might call them *iconic signs* and *non-iconic signs.*[8] Aesthetic signs are usually iconic. The American philosopher Suzanne Langer follows a parallel line inspired by Cassirer. Insisting on the difference between a linguistic system and an artistic system (though both are ' symbolic forms ') she sees this difference in both their formal properties (' Music is not a language because it does not have a vocabulary ') and in the nature of the signified: ' Music is a form of signifying activity which can, through its dramatic structure, express vital forms of experience for which language is particularly inappropriate. Its import is constituted by feeling, life, movement, and emotion . . .'

After the Second World War, efforts were made to unify and coordinate the different traditions particularly in the United States, the USSR and France. In America the description of symbolic systems other than language (gesture, zoo-semiotics) usually followed the procedures of descriptive linguistics. In the USSR intense activity in the field of semiotics has developed in the last sixty years under the influence of cybernetics and information theory: the work on ' secondary systems ' (based on language but not identical with it) is particularly original.

In France under the impetus of the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, R. Barthes and A. J. Greimas, semiology has turned above all to the study of social forms which function ' in the manner of a language ' (systems of kinship, myth, fashion, etc) and to the study of the language of literature. On the other hand, a certain critique of the sign and the assumptions implied by that notion has been developed [see Julia Kristeva, p 25].

Critique

In spite of the existence of these works and close on a century of history (plus twenty centuries of pre-history), semiotics is still more a project than an established science and the words of de Saussure retain the force of an unfulfilled wish. The reason lies not just in the slow tempo of a science in its early stages, but also in the measure of uncertainty that surrounds fundamental concepts

20 and principles, particularly that of the sign, both linguistic and non-linguistic. Semiotics is in a certain sense crushed by linguistics. It has either *taken non-linguistic signs as the starting point* in order to situate language in that context (the course taken by Peirce); and in this case the problem is that these signs do not lend themselves easily to precise determination, or if they do, they prove of minor importance and shed no light on the status of language (for instance, traffic signs); or *language is the starting point* (the course taken by de Saussure); here the risk is imposing the linguistic model on different phenomena, thereby reducing the work of semiotics to an act of naming (or re-naming). Calling familiar social facts 'signifier' or 'signified', 'syntagm' or 'paradigm' does not in itself advance knowledge in any degree.

The causes of this difficulty can be examined. They seem to be essentially linked with the particular place which *langue* holds in semiotics and with the very nature of the sign.

1. It is possible to speak, as Benveniste does, of a 'non-redundancy principle' among semiotic systems: 'two semiotic systems of different types cannot be mutually convertible . . . Man does not have several distinct systems for the *same* signification-relationship'. The signified cannot exist outside the relation with its signifier, and the signified of one system is not that of another.

2. Moreover, verbal language alone possesses the quality of secondarity.[9] As Cassirer had already observed, language is the only semiotic system with whose help we can discuss other systems as well as its own. Benveniste writes: 'One thing at least is certain, no semiology of sound, colour or image will be formulated in sounds, colours or images. Any semiology of a non-linguistic system has to borrow the means of language, and therefore can only exist in and through the semiology of *langue*'. If accepted, these two principles would make semiotics as it has been thought to date, impossible. The sense of dissatisfaction does not stem from the absence of a non-linguistic meaning – that undoubtedly exists; rather, it stems from the fact that this can only be discussed in linguistic terms which are nevertheless incapable of grasping the very specificity of the non-linguistically produced sense. A semiotics constructed on the basis of language (and we know no other for the moment) must abandon the study of the problem central to any semiotic system, namely that of signification, for it will never be dealing with anything other than linguistic signification, surreptitiously substituted for the real object. Semiotics of the non-linguistic area is short-circuited, not at the level of its object (which undoubtedly exists) but at that of its discourse which infiltrates the verbal into the results of its work.

This is why a displacement has taken place imperceptibly in recent semiotic studies: rather than express (illusorily) the relationship of signification, they focus on the relationship of symbolisa-

tion; that is, on that second relationship which links homogeneous entities not in a necessary manner (therefore inexpressible except through itself) as does the sign, but in a motivated manner, thereby revealing the mechanisms at work in a society.[10] The domain of the symbolic (usually reserved for ethnology, the history of religions, psychology and psychoanalysis) would thus be the object of semiotics. As for the usefulness of linguistics (at least in its present state) – that would seem to be problematic. The two disciplines deal with different objects and even where they come together on the same material (eg language) they consider it from different perspectives. Language is rich in symbolic processes, but these do not derive from the mechanism which is specifically linguistic.

Still less justified it would seem is the assimilation of non-symbolic codes to the object of semiotics, such as for example music. The relationship of symbolisation (and on a third level that of signification) is sufficiently specific to demand its own field of study.

Clearly then – if we set aside the problems of writing – semiotics is for the moment still a system of propositions rather than a body of established knowledge.

Editorial Notes

1. Charles Morris describes this triadic relation as 'semiosis': 'The process in which something functions as a sign may be called *semiosis*. This process . . . has commonly been regarded as involving three (or four) factors: that which acts as a sign, that which the sign refers to, and that effect on some interpreter in virtue of which the thing in question is a sign to that interpreter. These three components in semiosis may be called respectively, the *sign vehicle*, the *designatum* and the *interpretant;* the interpreter may be included as a fourth factor'. (*Foundations of the Theory of Signs*, Chicago 1938, p 3).

   Morris would not give unqualified assent to Todorov's characterisation of the interpretant as a signified. In fact, Morris has characterised the nature of the interpretant as a 'disposition, caused by the sign, to respond in a certain kind of way' (*ibid*, p 49). The term interpretant has become an integral part of the behaviourist discourse and is largely responsible for the confusion between sign and signal. Another result of the definition as 'a disposition to respond' generated attempts to establish an aesthetic scale of values by trying to measure these dispositions and quantifying them in terms of degrees of 'preferential behaviour' stimulated by signs.
2. A sinsign is a particular something functioning as a sign, while the legisign is a law functioning as a sign. A particular series of marks at a specific place, such as 'house', is a sinsign; such a specific set of marks is not however, the English word 'house', for this is 'one', while its instances or replicas are as numerous as the various employments of the word. It is a law or habit of usage, a 'universal' as over against its particular instances'. (Morris, *ibid*, p 48).

(There) is an important difference between the sign itself and the individual usage made of it; Peirce formulated this opposition in terms of type and token, or legisign and sinsign. The total number of words in a text equals the number of tokens or sinsigns; the amount of different words give us the number of types or legisigns'. (Todorov in *Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des Sciences du Langage*, p 138).

3. 'The notion of deixis . . . is introduced to handle the 'orientational' features of language which are relative to the time and place of utterance'. (John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*, Cambridge 1968, p 275). Examples: personal pronouns (I, you, he . . .), adverbials of place and time (here, there, now, then . . .) possess deictic qualities.
4. In his *Fundamentals of Language* (The Hague 1956) R. Jakobson refers to these indexical symbols as 'shifters'. For a discussion of the notable absence of shifters in the cinema, see Ben Brewster's essay 'Structuralism in Film Criticism', *Screen* V 12, no 1, p 49 ff.
5. Todorov makes a very rigorous distinction between a sign and a symbol: denotation (relation between sign and referent) and representation (the appearance of a mental image to the user of the sign) are particular instances of symbolisation. 'Symbolisation is a more or less stable association between two units on the same level (ie two signifiers or two signifieds)', while signification indicates the relation between signifier and signified. (*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des Sciences du Langage*, p 134).
6. Gottlob Frege (1848-1925): German philosopher and logician. His distinction between *Sinn* and *Bedeutung* closely parallels de Saussure's distinction between the referential aspect of the sign and the signified. His article 'Sinn und Bedeutung' appeared in the *Zeitschrift fur Philosophie und Philosophische Kritik*, 1892. The essay has been translated by Max Black, *Phil. R.* LVII (1948) as 'Sense and Reference', and by H. Feigel and W. Sellars as 'On Sense and Nomination' in *Readings in Philosophical Analysis*, New York (1949). Other works available in English include: *The Foundation of Arithmetic* (1884), translated by J. L. Austin, Oxford (1959), and *Philosophical Writings*, translated by P. Geach and M. Black, Oxford (1952).
7. The Prague Linguistic Circle (also known as the Prague School) held its first meeting on October 6, 1926, under the presidency of V. Mathesius. Among the participants were Roman Jakobson, B. Havranek, Jan Rypka and B. Trnka. Other scientists associated with the circle were P. Bogatyrev, Jan Mukarovsky, N. S. Trubetzkoy, Rene Wellek and B. Tomashevsky. As this list indicates, the ties with what has come to be known as the Russian Formalist movement are very close indeed. 'In the programmatic statement published in 1935 in *Slovo a slovenost*, the organ of the Prague Linguistic Circle, the signatories – Havranek, Jakobson, Mathesius, Mukarovsky, Trnka – postulated an inextricable tie between the science of language and the study of poetry. The relation between the 'aesthetic function in language' and other uses of speech was referred to as one of the most challenging problems of modern linguistics. Hence the importance of poetic speech. 'Only poetry', declared the manifesto, 'enables us to experience the act of speech in its totality and reveals to us language not as ready-made static system but as creative energy'. (V. Ehrlich in *Russian Formalism*, p 157). The work of the Prague School has led to spectacular advances in phonology and has become the basis of the functional view of language (functionalism) as exemplified by Roman Jakob-

son and André Martinet (although there are substantial differences between the views of both scientists).

8. In his book *Signification and Significance* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967, p 69), Charles Morris modified this view expressed in 1939: 'It seems semiotically neater to say that all signs signify but that no sign necessarily denotes. I prefer, however, not to make a decision on this point here'.
9. *Secondarity* is that which permits verbal language (a) to talk about its own signs; (b) to produce sentences which refuse denotation as well as representation; (c) to use words in a sense which is totally new, the context supplying the key to understanding.
10. These distinctions must be seen in the light of de Saussure's definition of the verbal sign as arbitrary (ie non-motivated) but necessary, while the symbolic sign is motived and non-necessary, eg the metaphoric relation between 'flame' and 'love'. The inexpressible, the unthinkable is the logical absurdity of a signified without a signifier. It is the existence of a necessary and non-motivated relation between signifiers and signifieds which determines 'what can be said'.

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Translated by Diana Matias

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Julia Kristeva

The term *semiotics* today calls to mind a tradition rather than a homogeneous body of doctrine. The period of the Stoics, the Middle Ages with its *modi significandi* the eighteenth century with Locke, Leibniz, Condillac and the Ideologists, and finally the beginning of the twentieth century with the axiomatic method that became imperative in logic and mathematics and then entered Saussurian and, later, Hjelmslevian and structural linguistics – these are the *great moments* of that *semiotic activity* which marks our Western *episteme* from its Greek beginnings to its positivist apotheosis. Yet it is clear that if this semiotic activity has always been present in the organisation of our knowledge, it is only very recently, within no more than the last few years, that it has emerged once more into the scientific and even ideological consciousness, taking its place in this resurgence amongst those events that characterise radically modern thought.

How is this emergence today of semiotics to be explained? To try to answer that question is, in fact, to try to answer a question that, because posed in metaphysical terms, is considerably more awkward: 'What is semiotics?'. In this paper I shall attempt to outline the terms of an answer by following briefly through history the determination and the impact of the semiotic enterprise in its 'great moments' in the Western *episteme*. I shall then go on to consider the situation of contemporary semiotics in relation to the fact of its emergence (what is it that today troubles and revives semiotic thinking?) and, at the same time, to consider to what extent it can break with its past in order to allow the recasting of those disciplines which were permitted by its inaugural gesture – logic and, closer to us, the human sciences. For, and here I am anticipating the thesis that I am going to stress at the end of this paper, if the *raison d'être* of the semiotic enterprise from the time of the Stoics to the present day has always been to found scientific abstraction in posing the *sign* and in so doing allowing the constitution of science (including linguistic science) as systematisation and formalisation, semiotics is now called upon to question these foundations, the foundations of science (and of linguistics), and to work towards the constitution of a *theory of knowledge* in which the project of linguistics, duly questioned, will itself be integrated. In other words, having provided the positive foundations of metaphysics and/or science, semiotics now offers itself as the area of the interrogation, analysis and criticism of metaphysics and/or science that they may be refounded in a new theoretical gesture (of which all that may be said is that it is practised as a critique of metaphysics).

26 As is well known, the Stoics were the first to construct a theory of the sign *(semeion):* there is no such theory in Aristotle who speaks of ' immediate truths ', of first principles known intuitively by the *nous*. Between the *sound* (name) and the *thing* the Stoics locate an intermediary which is the *signification*. This intermediary they call the *lekton* or the expressible, a non-corporeal entity, situated on the side of language, that it has been found possible to translate by the Saussurian term *signifié*. The step taken here by the Stoics, at first sight elementary, is of crucial importance. Why? Because it poses in a clear and definite manner the opposition real/language and places the *signification* in the position of *necessary relation* between the two. The fundamental problem that determines Western thinking over the whole of its history, the relation matter/spirit is thus resolved by the establishment of a mediation, the *sense* hidden in the *sign*. It will henceforth be possible to put matter (point of emphasis of the Epicurian materialists, the principle opponents of the Stoics) between brackets and at the same time positivise the (platonic) *idea* by positing the domain of *signification*. The Stoic postulate of the sign thus neutralises and deflects Epicurus's materialism and, in a play of dialectic, recuperates, in scientificising it, Plato's idealism. What then does *signification* mean in Stoic doctrine?

The doctrine of the Stoics is above all *logical:* they formulate their famous syllogisms (' if there is sunshine, it is daylight: there is sunshine, therefore it is daylight ') concerning compound, conditional or disjunctive propositions, syllogisms which display, in other words, the mechanism of a *proof*. The *sign* is also a *proof*, but if the syllogism was a proof within the process of reasoning, the sign installs the proof, so to speak, vertically, by posing a relation of necessity not between the premises of a conditional proposition and its conclusion, but between the out-there and that which speaks it, the thing and the word. That relation is the *lekton*, the expressible, the *signifié*, the sense. It can thus be seen that the sound is not identical with the thing, the word is not a (platonic) identity in relation to its out-side: their relation is not intrinsic, it is a relation of concommitance, of succession, of metonymy. The sign is no longer an *evidence* (as was the Idea, an *a-letheia*), but a *sequence* the two terms of which (referent-sound) are in a relation of *necessary induction* (through the *lekton*).

It is for this reason that the logic of the Stoics that has been called an inducive logic is at the same time a *semiology*. It has been found possible to say that ' the semiology logically precedes the theory of demonstration which cannot be established without it '[1] and indeed the Stoics do present semiology as a justification of their inductive logic. We ought perhaps, however, at a deeper level and in order to put things in their proper places, to see in the Stoic semiology a procedure subsequent to their logical doctrine, an inversion of that doctrine which, elaborated first of

all within the area of the processes of judgement, is orientated in the direction of the material and infinite out-there which is thus recuperated withinto the process of judgement. Not withinto language, but withinto a certain language; that of the process of judgement. the rule of inductive judgement is thus at the basis of our theory of the sign; what we call semeiosis is *not the signifying activity in all its complexity, but only one of the signifying acts such as the structure of judgement allows it to filter through.*

It can be understood here why the theory of the sign, the matrix of the sign (object- *lekton*-sound) is indispensable that may be constructed on it all logic, and thus all reasoning, and hence all science (since fundamentally it is only a deductive reasoning compelled by the principles of identity and non-contradiction in the terms of a sequence). The semiotic gesture is thus the founding gesture of science. The Stoic *sign* in place of the platonic *idea* means the replacement of Philosophy by Science. I shall not here consider the complicity of sign and idea, of Zeno and Plato, but will call attention to what distinguishes the semiotic gesture from that of philosophy, for it is precisely this that today renders the semiotic problem urgently contemporary. This distinction may be grasped in two ways: 1. the semiotic project founds that of science; 2. the semiotic project replaces the fundamental philosophical question, that of Being (as Hegel and Heidegger have constantly emphasised), with the question of signifying, with, that is, the question of the relation out-there/language, infinite/finite, or matter/sense. Now what is this question if not that posed throughout its history by *materialism?* Not that Stoicism is a materialism; on the contrary it is the *repression* of the materialism of Epicurus and Democritus, a successful repression indeed and the more interesting in that it offers, in the sign, the very mechanism mounted in the discussion with the materialist thinkers of Antiquity in order to occult the infinity of matter and substitute in its place the probative finitude of the lekton – projection of the syllogism.

Semiotics is not, therefore, a philosophy; its domain is not that of being, essence, evidence. It is, basically, a theory of the processes of signifying, a *theory of knowledge* that may become either idealist or materialist according to the answer it gives to the problems of the relation matter/sense, according to the way in which it posits the object language, etc. Its problem is that of the materialists, that of out-there and language, and it is thus that it cuts across linguistics, serving as a lever not only for the reformulation of the object of linguistics but also as a point of support for any radical materialism, for any gnosiology aiming at elaboration as materialist.

We begin to understand here that what has been long sought for under the name of ' matter ' is probably that which the matrix of the sign came to occult: not a so-called ' substance ', but an infinity and plurality given to the mobile ' subject ' in the modes of a significance that is diversified and not enclosed in the specific

28 matrices of the sign. The Stoic sign that will be adopted by the whole of Western thought (Hegel and Saussure included) elides the plurality of the outside (out-of-sign) that it begins by posing, puts it between brackets and evolves in the *signifié* that immediately becomes primordial and absolute: a transcendental *signifié*, origin and refuge of transcendence. The term *transcendental signifié* is Jacques Derrida's and indicates how the pyramid of the sign (*référent-signifié-signifiant*) ends by resolving itself into the hypostasis of the signified that culminates in a God. It is not by chance that the historical period that sees the establishment of the doctrine of the sign by the Stoics coincides with the passage in Greek religion to monotheism, the repression of polytheism that paves the way for Christianity. With the sign is established that 'sobria ebreitas' described by Philo Judæus: a rational mastery over infinity for which must be found the finitude that will evoke it. It can be seen how the interrogation of the sign carried out today by Derrida shows clearly what Hegel and after him, though in a way which hardly begins to approach the problem, dialectical materialism, try to analyse: the congenitally metaphysical nature of philosophy and non-critical science, of idea and sign. Hegel called attention to this metaphysics and today the semiotic interrogation, interrogation of the sign, is able to demonstrate it in showing explicitly how the sign elides the real on behalf of a transcendental *Signifié*. Henceforth it will be necessary to combat this transcendence of the Logos and, faced with the sign, to think another concept that avoids transcendence and metaphysics (identity, noncontradiction) and suggests the material infinity in its movement of differentiation. It is to this end that Derrida speaks of *écriture* and *différance*.

We can understand, therefore, why today, when materialism reappears once again on the scene of Western theory, confronting the wavering of the idealism consecrated by the Christian religion, this materialism takes the form of a semiotics (in the sense of an interrogation of the sign). It can indeed only operate on the terrain of a semiotics, on that terrain where the problem is posed, in all its radicality, of the infinite outside and the finite sign-language that sign-ifies it. It is there in the juncture of the sign, and not in the zone of being or non-being, that is located a thinking intent on reformulating the kernel elements of our culture. We can understand too why, when the science of language is stifling in an ever more refined formalisation which nonetheless continues to go round in circles in the old framework inherited from the grammarians of Alexandria or Port-Royal, semiotics offers itself as a possible way out to the extent to which it takes hold by the root of that which has blocked our thinking and compelled it to evolve according to the principles of identity and non-contradiction, according to the figures of the syllogism, of subject and predicate, etc; it takes hold of the sign.

Because of its importance for our whole civilisation the semiotic question, if it has founded science, has not ceased to be a necessarily ideological question: it touched the religion of the Middle Ages and the humanist and libertarian ideology of the eighteenth century.

Let us briefly call to mind here the theories of the Modistæ of the Middle Ages. From the work of St Augustine, but also alongside that work in the work of linguists such as Siger de Courtrai or Scaliger, is developed a complex reflection on the *modes of signifying* which present in various ways (active, passive, etc) a *seneſiance* understood as the process of signification. The complexity of these texts, written in a difficult Latin, renders them arid reading today and this doubtless deprives us of some of the most fully worked-out studies of signification. It remains no less true, however, that the medieval sign hypostasises what I have referred to as a transcendental signified and makes of it a divine transcendence, absolute God, on the foundation of which unfolds the purely Christian doctrine. The quarrels between nominalism and realism, the problem of universals, are situated within a semiotic problematic: it is indeed a question of the value of the signifying unity, of the nature of the existence of a signifying unity or unities on the basis of an ideal immanence.

Nearer to us, Leibniz, in opposition to Descartes, also takes up the tradition of the Stoics (in his *Théodicée* he even acknowledges his kinship with Stoicism). His *Nouveaux Essais sur l'Entendement Humain* poses the question of the relation word/thing/idea, and in another context his attempt to construct a ' calculus ratiocinator ' that would embrace the totality of signifying activity is well known. Combining mathematics, logic and linguistics, he proposes an *ars characteristica* – theory and art of the formation of signs in which all considerations corresponding to the idea must be drawn from the sign alone, and an *ars combinatoria* – a general computation providing a formal method for deriving consequences of signs. Setting out from the Stoic doctrine which, basing itself on the sign, established a deductive system that operated with minimal elements or *terms,* in accordance with strict rules, Leibniz became the precursor of the symbolic logic which will be developed at the beginning of the twentieth century and which will become one aspect of semiotics in the wider sense of the term.

Yet if the Leibnizian semiotic could lead to Carnap and his book *Der Logische Aufbau der Welt,* the eighteenth-century with Locke, Condillac and the French Ideologists generally proposes another aspect of the semiotic problem, This is, as Locke puts it, the relation between the word and the reality of things: the sign excludes the real thing and finds its area of activity between the word and the ' idea ', but the question of its relation to the real remains posed and it is precisely this that sensualism will attempt to work out. The theory of knowledge appropriate to mechanistic material-

ism (from Condillac to Diderot) will be a theory of the sign: its development through the senses, its functioning in discourse, its transgression in art through another basic unity that avoids the univocity of the sign and also its transcendence and that is often designated as a *hieroglyph*. It may be said without exaggeration that the sensualists and the ideologists of the eighteenth century are already consciously semioticians. I am thinking here of the theories of the sign and the hieroglyph to be found in Rousseau and Diderot, as well as of that later science of signs announced by Destutt de Tracy in his *Eléments d'Idéologie:* ' The whole of our knowledge is formed of ideas; these ideas never appear to us except in the clothing of signs '; (grammar is) ' the science of signs '; ' every system of signs is a language: let us now add that every practice of a language, every emission of signs, is a discourse and let our grammar be the analysis of all types of discourse '. One cannot but see in this postulate the project of a grammar which is nothing other than a general semiology.

In our own century the semiotic enterprise takes on first of all the aspect of formal logic, or, better, let us say that the project of the Stoics finds its apogee in the symbolic logic of Boole, Frege, Peano, Peirce, Russell, Whitehead and later the Vienna Circle. After having founded science, the logico-semiotic enterprise of the Stoics has thus objectivised itself in a particular science: symbolic logic.

These two results – (1) the foundation of the project of science (2) the constitution of symbolic logic – have evidently not exhausted the whole range of possibilities contained originally in the semiotic enterprise. They leave untouched the domain of linguistic signification and of all forms of signifying practice – art, literature, religion, mythology, social relations, etc. How is one to approach diversity of signifying activity of which a foresight was allowed in the setting up of on the one hand *science* as rigorous intellection (obeying the laws of inductive and deductive logic) and on the other a *symbolic logic* which, elaborating explicatory models of, for example, the systems of mathematics, claimed to master artificial semiotic systems? How is one to master the signifying activity of language, the arts, social practice? In other words, how is a *human science* to be founded?

It is in the work done towards finding an answer to this question that the semiotic enterprise once again becomes crucial. Peirce and Saussure, more or less contemporaneously, posit the necessity for a science of signs the scope of which must be – in order to render it scientific – the whole of human activity. It can be said that consciously or unconsciously modern semiotics stems from the enormous impact of the positivist philosophy of Comte and of axiomatic method, which impact *demands* that such a positivism and such an axiomatisation be applied to the, as yet, imprecisely defined domain of language or to that of the ' human ' in general. It is doubtless not by chance that Peirce, the first semiotician, is

an axiomatician, and it was doubtless necessary that the foundation by Saussure of linguistics as a science (as against philology and comparative grammar) be simultaneous with the foundation of semiology by the same Saussure. It may be said that the birth of linguistics is a birth of semiotics overdetermined by axiomatic method. This is made clear in Peirce: 'Logic, in its general sense, is . . . only another name for *semiotic*, the quasi-necessary, or formal, doctrine of signs'.[3] Similarly, in Saussure, even if his project does not take this openly logical form, the reflection is determined, in the last instance, by axiomatics, for if Saussure's principal endeavour is orientated towards the definition of the sign as basic unit which brackets out the referent in order to operate only within the 'arbitrary' relation between *signifiant* and *signifié*, is this not an indication that Saussure is aiming at the isolation of a formal entity (and the definition of the sign as arbitrary is the symptom of this formality) that will permit him, in exactly the same way as the Stoics, to found a science (which cannot but be formal): 'Signs that are wholly arbitrary realise better than the others the ideal of the semiological process; that is why language, the most complex and universal of all systems of expression, is also the most characteristic; in this sense linquistics can become the master-pattern for all branches of semiology although language is only one particular semiological system'.[4] Thus, in creating formal linguistics, Saussure revived semiology as a science of signs that had at once to justify linguistics as a science and include it within the terms of a reflection that goes beyond the narrow framework of the study of *langue;* a reflection on the modes of signification.

Saussurian semiology was a warning both against the *contraction* of the object of linguistics and against extreme *technocratisation*, a warning forgotten for a good many years and which has only recently been remembered. This warning was expressed by Saussure in two brief observations: (1) Saussure never envisaged the linguistics he founded as a self-sufficient discipline. He stressed this firmly: if linguistics is the master-pattern of all semiology, *langue*, that object analysed by the Greek grammarians and formalised by the Stoics, is only one particular system of signs and, as such, only one part of semiology; 'if I have succeeded in assigning linguistics a place among the sciences, it is because I have related it to semiology'.[5] (2) This semiology is not, however, a neutral domain in which axiomatisation is to guard its formal purity (as in mathematics and symbolic logic). Semiology concerns itself with a social domain and its formalisation (permitted by the establishment of the concept of the sign) must be justified by some (psychological or sociological) theory. The semiotic model is not innocent, it is supported by a *theory* or an ideology, and if this is true of semiotics, it is also true of linguistics which is only one of its subsections: 'A science that studies the life of

 signs within society is thus conceivable; it would be a part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology . . . To determine the exact place of semiology is the task of the psychologist '.[6]

The Saussurian project may be resumed as follows: there is no linguistics other than as a part of semiotics which in turn is only a part of a general theory of psychological and sociological functioning. As far as linguistics is concerned, this formulation means that *linguistics can only find its full object as a part of semiotics which is part of a gnosiology.* Any other isolation of linguistics constrains it to dealing with a truncated, restricted, limited object, ignorant of this abstraction.

Today, faced with the massive enterprise of structural and even generative linguistics and even while recognising their achievement, it can be said that, linguistics not having taken into consideration Saussure's warning, we are witnessing a fragmentation of the body of *langue* which is pushing formalisation to its ultimate refinement but which is failing to achieve that which linguistics has taken as its object: the explication of the complexity of the act of signification. The resort to semiotics is thus a necessity for the linguist, restoring to him that complexity, demanding of him an act of epistemological and theoretical reflection on his object of study and the concepts and formalisations he uses in his work. It is in this sense that Benveniste, noting the extreme formalisation-atomisation of *langue* in contemporary linguistics (American structuralism), stresses the urgency of the need for the semiotic approach which the linguist must join to his method in order to renew his vision of language: ' It is from progress made in the analysis of symbols that may notably be expected a better understanding of the complex processes of signification in language and probably in areas outside language as well. And since this functioning is unconscious, as is the structure of behaviour, psychologists, sociologists and linguists are usefully combining forces in this research '.[7]

The role of support for and means of the recasting of linguistics is, however, only one of the roles that the semiotic enterprise is called upon to fulfil today. There is one other crucial role that the philosophy of science has not failed to stress: the role of semiotics in the constitution of a general *theory of discourse* and hence of an *epistemology.* The question has been posed since Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* which founded a reflection on the sign and the various types of sign. Heavily influenced by Husserl, the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen, with Brøndal and Hjelmslev, turned towards the construction of a semiotics conceived as a system of formalisation or different discourses and composed, as system, of several strata of formalisation (denotation, connotation, etc), and completed by a *meta-semiology:* ' In conformity with Saussure's terminology we can define a *semiology* as a metasemiotic with a

non-scientific semiotic as an object semiotic. And finally, we can use the designation *metasemiology* of a meta- (semiotic scientific) whose object semiotics are semiologies '.[8] Semiology is thus assigned the task of formalising, hence of rendering explicitly not only the foundations of linguistics, but also the foundations of the discourse that treats of linguistics, of, that is, semiology. Epistemology of linguistics and epistemology of the epistemology of linguistics, metasemiology is elaborated as the ultimate metalanguage that exhausts all possible formalisations. In the Hjelmslevian project semiology thus becomes the supreme means of the unification of the formalisation of different languages. It is as such that it can tackle ' the task of analysing various – geographical and historical, political and social, sacred, psychological – content-purports that are attached to nation (as content for national language), region (as content for regional language), the value-forms of styles, personality (as content for physiognomy; essentially a task for individual psychology), mood, etc. Many special sciences, in the first place, presumably, sociology, ethnology and psychology, must be thought of as making their contribution here '[9]

This definition of the purpose of semiology as that of furnishing the final, unifying formalisation of the various types of language is found again in the thinking of Morris. He regards semiotics as the epistemological control point, thus *unifying* the projects of the other sciences. In other words, semiology must analyse and formalise the process of signification that founds not only linguistics but all science: ' Semiotic is not merely a science among sciences but an organon or instrument of all the sciences. This function can be performed in two ways. One is by making training in semiotic a regular part of the equipment of the scientist. In this way a scientist would become critically conscious of his linguistic apparatus and develop careful habits in its use. The second way is by specific investigations of the languages of the special sciences. The linguistically expressed result of all the sciences is part of the subject matter of descriptive semiotic '. These considerations are made in the perspective of ' a unification of the sciences on the basis of the concept of the sign '; ' The significance of semiotic lies in the fact that it is a step in the unification of science, since it supplies the foundations for any special science of signs, such as linguistics, logic, mathematics, rhetoric and (to some extent at least) aesthetics.'[10]

Reference to semiotics is present in the work of the Linguistic Circle of Prague, but here it is a question of a typology of signifying systems rather than of a semiology as apex of the pyramid of modes of discourse. The task of semiology will be to reveal the particularities of signifying systems, to determine that which makes them irreducibly different from one another. Hence the great importance that will be attached to the study of the specificity of art (' the organising distinction of art, and by which it is distin-

guished from other semiological structures, is the direction of its aim not towards the *signifié* but towards the sign itself '[11]). This tendency towards the establishment of a typology of signifying systems, supported by Roman Jakobson, is being developed today by the semiotic researches carried out in Soviet Russia and in Europe in general, while in the USA semioticians tend to prolong rather the positivist spirit of Morris's semiotic thinking. Semiotics as typology of signifying systems is more *historical* and more *sociological*, or, better, by its rigour and its scientific character it replaces the old humanist forms of discourse in the domains of history and sociology. It is precisely as a semiology of this tendency that Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology may be understood and it can be said that typological semiotics is the method with which the attempt is today being made to develop the 'human sciences'.

Two conceptions of semiotics, which are moreover complementary and fundamentally similar, thus seem to be developing at the moment: (1) semiotics as point of control and unification of forms of discourse (including scientific discourse); (2) semiotics as typology of signifying systems. Following on from this second tendency, a third becomes henceforth possible. Without attempting to unify in a gesture of metaphysical mastery all possible modes of discourse, as Hjelmslev and Morris wanted, but taking as its point of departure the differences between the various sign systems, semiotics could begin to investigate its very constitutive kernel element; the sign and the scientific discourse it permits (as we have seen in our discussion of the Stoics). Semiotics could then try to analyse that which it has never dared call into question no matter what form it has taken during its history: the matrix of the Stoic sign. This would be to call into question semiotics itself, but without the claim of metasemiology to furnish the final rules of the semiotic project. Such a semiotics, that I will call an *analytical* semiotics, a *semanalysis*, would, on the contrary, attempt to analyse, that is, to dissolve, the constitutive centre of the semiotic enterprise such as it was posited by the Stoics, and this would mean the interrogation of the fundamental matrix of our civilisation grasped in its ideological, neuralgic locus.

It is necessary to stress the novelty of this crucial moment of the semiotic activity in which it undertakes the analysis of its own gesture. A long period, stretching from Zeno to Saussure and his successors, seems now to be closed and theory today seeks a different path from that suggested by the Stoics. As in fifth century BC Greece, the discussion now centres on the fundamental elements of the system of knowledge, elements capable of leading it in various directions. What is involved here through the calling into question of the sign is the whole gnosiology (theory of knowledge) as it has been thought in the West since Zeno.

It is easy to see, then, why semiotics as semanalysis imposes

itself so forcefully on contemporary thinking. The reason is – and I repeat – that a semiotic activity orientated directly towards the matrix of the sign, foundation of our culture, is the only means of thinking the constants of that culture and of posing once more, in order perhaps to formulate them in a new way, the problems of the signifying act, its relation to the material infinity, rationality, scientificity, and so on.

Is this new calling into question necessary? And if so, why today?

The necessity for this new calling into question of the constants of our culture, and hence of rationality, scientificity and every individual science, is to be felt in every domain. Linguistics – to take only that science here as example – today finds itself so fragmented and so restricted in all its parts (by the very demands of scientific procedure) to a narrow reductive abstraction that the complexity of the linguistic act – of the signifying act – disappears. Faced with this disappearance linguistics, fragmented and locked in its reductive abstraction, turns to semiotics for help – to semiotics not as some miraculous synthesis or some magical return to material complexity or signifying plenitude, but as a theory of knowledge, as a reformulation of intellection starting with the element that determines it: the sign.

But why is this development from gnosiology to semiotics taking place today? What is it, in other words, that in the second half of our century demands the reconsideration of the gnosiological question from the site of the semiotics?

Let us call to mind at this point three factors exerting crucial pressure on modern history: the Marxist concept of ' work ' within the context of dialectical materialism; the Freudian concept of the ' unconscious '; the dramatic eruption onto the world theatre of long oppressed nations such as China and India with their linguistic and scriptural systems, their complex signifying practices which depart from the principles of sign and semeiosis established by the Greeks (I am thinking, for example, of the hieroglyphic writing of the Chinese and of the hypersemiotic practices of the Indians, their sacred texts, their rites, their mastery of the body). Without insisting any further here on the influence exerted on our culture by these hypersemiotic practices of the East, I will stop for a moment to consider the concepts of *work* and the *unconscious* in connection with the constitution of a semanalysis.

In his study of the capitalist system of exchange Marx showed that it is a semiotic system in which *money*, through a series of mutations, becomes the *general equivalent* or the *sign* of the work invested in the exchanged object. The economic system is thus a semiotic system: a chain of communication with a sender and a receiver and an object of exchange – money – which is the *sign* of a piece of *work*. The system of exchange only concerns the sign, but on this side and that of the sign open the zones of *work* which

 the sign represents, but also, and principally, occults. What takes place in this zone of work which supports the semiotic process but which is not reducible to it? Marx's economic theory does not offer an exhaustive answer to this question and only *poses* the concept of pre-sign work.

Now correlatively to this introduction in economic theory of the concept of work, *dialectical materialism* begins to examine the problem of the relation real-signification, and consequently the metaphysical basis of all sciences, the point of departure for which were the premises of an idealist philosophy. The initial moment of this examination by dialectical materialism was the thesis written by the young Marx on Democritus and Epicurus (remember that it was in opposition to Epicurus's theory that the Stoics asserted themselves in Greece).[12] Later, Engels in his *Dialektik der Natur* invokes the necessity for a scientific project which takes account of the dialectic between infinite and finite, totality (to be studied) and object (of study). These problems can be seen to continue the preoccupations of Hegel in his *Wissenschaft der Logik*. Hegel posed these problems as an idealist philosopher preoccupied with Being and Idea of which the real was merely a formation. Engels reverses the problematic and poses Hegel's questions, it may be said, no longer as a philosopher but as a ' semiotician ': the infinite is no longer the idea but matter, and the finite is the real object which, in scientific theory, becomes the sign of the infinite dialectically realised in a finitude. The relation infinite-finite becomes a relation matter-sign. If the problematic is thus ' semiotic ', it is not so in a positivist fashion; it is analytically semiotic, it is gnosiological. Its object is that which precedes, determines and decentres the sign, namely ' matter ' qua movement and work. (Was this not the problematic of Heraclitus, Epicurus, Democritus, the pre-Stoics?).

On *another* plane complementary to that of dialectical materialism is situated *Freudian psychoanalysis*. Freud's discovery of the unconscious as *other scene (anderer Schauplatz)* distinct from that of communication and ordinary logic, as, similarly, Freudian method which consists in tapping the unconscious through language, has permitted in our own period the description of the unconscious as ' structured like a language '[13] and the search for the particularities of that linguistic structure. Freud indicates clearly that the signifying activity operative in the unconscious is neither a calculation nor a judgement, but a transformation, a *work;* indeed he entitles one of his texts *The Work of the Dream*[14] and specifies that the semantic and syntagmatic permutation in dream narrative denotes less a fixed sense than a transformation a signifying work in which the subject is included. Language is thus posited as the object of psychoanalysis, no longer, however, as closed system with a given sense but as system of the *production* of signification and of the subject. In this same moment, and for the first time, the relation of the subject to his discourse is studied

with precision. Such a conception of the functioning of the process of signification connects to the critique carried through by dialectical materialism of the metaphysical character of a certain rationalism or scientism constructed on the basis of the principle of identity and non-contradiction: founding principle of the sign and its system.

A semanalysis will therefore base itself on these two radical concepts in order to undertake the epistemological criticism of the sign and its system. It will be the area of the application of dialectical materialism and psychoanalysis towards the constitution, starting from an analysis of languages, of a gnosiology.

It is clear that in such a perspective, the perspective, that is, of the consideration of the process of signification as a work and a production that exceeds the sign, the fixed sense and the closed structure, a reformulation of the smallest elements of our analytical apparatus becomes imperative: minimal units, modes of junction, etc. This reformulation is only just beginning (as, for instance, in Derrida's texts devoted to *écriture*). It is a question, therefore, of assigning, without totally abandoning them, notions such as sign, subject, structure, etc, to their exact place in the working of the process of signification, by postulating to begin with, and in order to delimit invasion by metaphysics, that every process of signification is a *formal play of differences*, that is, of *traces*.

To speak of traces does not, however, mean that I am trying to reintroduce a substantialism that linguistics has taken a long time to eliminate. To speak of traces means the neutralisation of the metaphysical conception of a Logos given immediately in the *phone* to the self-present Subject, and the postulation in place of the old – phonetising and phonetic – logocentrism of a new concept of *écriture:*

> It may be called *gramme* or *différance*. The play of differences supposes syntheses and inter-references such that there is no question at any moment of a single element being *present* in itself and referring only to itself . . . without referring to another element which is itself not simply present. This concatenation means that every element – phoneme or grapheme – is constituted from the trace in it of the other elements of the chain or system. This concatenation, this tissue, is the *text* that can only be produced in the transformation of another text. Nothing, neither in the elements nor in the system, is anywhere simply present or absent. Throughout there is nothing but differences of differences and traces of traces. The *gramme* is, then, the most general concept of semiology . . . and it is appropriate not merely to the field of writing in the narrow or classic sense, but also to that of linguistics . . . *Différance* is the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the *spacing* through which the elements relate to one another. It is the

 developing space of the chain of speech – that previously has been called temporal and linear . . .[15]

Such a theoretical conception of signification, a conception implicit in the formalisations of contemporary linguistics, can and must be extended over the vast field of signifying practices (myth, religion, art, etc), and this is the task of semanalysis.

It is impossible today to forecast the possible results of this extension. One thing, however, seems to be certain: in order to achieve its elaboration this semanalysis needs to provide itself with a *specific object* which the traditional modes of analysis are incapable of grasping in all its specificity. That object is to be found in the so-called literary or poetic text. Why? This specific type of signifying practice carried out through *langue* but remaining irreducible to its categories has always troubled science. Under the name of magic, madness, or, in more ornamental fashion, literature, it has been submitted to various attempts at recuperation into rationality but has always resisted as bearer of a surplus of signification that the system of the sign is unable to contain. It may well be that this surplus is seen more distinctly when focused in the light not of an attempt at containment in a sign system, but of a semanalysis orientated towards that pre-signifying and preconscious work, a work that the *text* exposes. We may thus begin to encompass semanalysis in giving it as object the 'text' – a concept that it is first of all necessary to define as particular domain of signifying practice. domain in which signification is engendered in relation to an infinite material exterior and in relation to its own constituants in an activity of the generation of sense before its product-ion.

The conceptualisation of such a problematic is currently being worked through. But literary practice itself has always been elaborated in terms of a work of research on the laws of its own production, and so of the production of sense in language in general. This is even more evident in modern times in the work of Joyce, Mallarmé, Artaud: literature becomes a veritable exploration of the generation of sense, of the production of sense in language.

If semanalysis occupies itself with this modern literature, it is not with the aim of constituting a particular branch of semiotics destined for the study of literature and as the necessary replacement of classical rhetoric. If semanalysis concerns itself with the text, it is solely that it may provide itself with an object where the specificities of the signifying act are most clearly manifested, an activity that the Stoic system of the sign was unable to think. It is in this way that semanalysis will be able to work out the concepts and methods that will serve in the elaboration of what has been referred to here as a materialist gnosiology.

The exact sciences – mathematics, logic, linguistics – can furnish

concepts and models for this semanalysis which will to a certain extent be transformed and displaced in the process of the semanalytical reflection and will be operative as subverted premises. They will thus find their rightful place as branches of a general theory of signification, branches which once reintegrated into the whole cannot but be modified.

Notes

1. V. Brochard, 'La logique des Stoïciens': *Etudes de philosophie ancienne et de philosophie moderne* Paris 1954 p 231.
2. cf Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* Paris 1967; *L'écriture et la différence* Paris 1967.
3. 'Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs': *The Philosophy of Peirce: Selected Writings* ed J Buchler London 1940 p 98.
4. *Course in General Linguistics* London 1960 p 68.
5. *Ibid* p 16.
6. *Ibid* p 16.
7. cf E Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale* Paris 1966 p 13.
8. L Hjelinslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* Madison 1963 p 120.
9. *Ibid* p 125.
10. Charles W. Morris, *Foundations of the Theory of Signs: International Encyclopedia of Unified Science* Vol. I Chicago 1955 pp 135, 80.
11. cf Jan Mukarovsky 'La dénomination poétique et la fonction esthétique de la langue' (1936) *Poétique* No 3 pp 392-398.
12. cf Marx, *Differenz der demokritischen und epikureischen Naturphilosophie: Werke* Sup Vol I Berlin 1968 pp 257-373.
13. cf J. Lacan *Ecrits* Paris 1966 (eg p 594, p 838).
14. The text is, of course, the sixth chapter of *Die Traumdeutung:* 'Der Traumarbeit'.
15. J. Derrida, 'Sémiologie et grammatologie': *Informations sur les sciences sociales* VII-3 p 142.

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Translated by Stephen Heath and Christopher Prendergast

Christian Metz on Jean Mitry's L'Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma, Vol II

In principle, the second volume of Jean Mitry's *L'Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma* should not be studied apart from the first – they are part of the same conception, appearing within two years of each other (1963 and 1965), and the references from one to the other are numerous. Nevertheless I don't intend to summarise the contribution of the first volume here since I have already done so in some detail elsewhere[1] and the result could only be tediously repetitious.

The first volume was devoted to *structures* – that is, to the most fundamental and constant features of cinematic expression; the second volume deals with forms – that is, with the more particular, though still very general, modalities of the basic structures previously examined. The point common to the various analyses contained in the first volume – which included the combination of images as a fact of language, the role of the screen rectangle, the duality of the represented and the representation, the precise status of spectator ' participation ', the nature of ' visual rhythm ' etc – was that they were in principle applicable to any passage in any film; whereas the areas dealt with in the second volume concern: certain types of cinema (modern, realist, ' un-realist ', pioneer . . .); certain types of images (the so-called ' subjective ' images, the so-called ' metaphorical ' images, etc); certain elements of film considered in terms of their particular contribution to the totality (speech, music, colour); and the privileged relationship which the cinema has with two other arts, the novel and the theatre. Two things need to be added to this list of questions broached – and I have not included the subjects dealt with more briefly (which, as might be expected, are numerous in a volume of 466 sizeable pages long): on the one hand a conscious return to problems like language (already dealt with in the first volume, but the development of connected questions in the meantime has justified a reassessment); and a chapter of general philosophy (' The Consciousness of the Real ' p 179-278) whose presence and length will undoubtedly come as a surprise to certain readers. The author explains the inclusion (p 179-278) in these terms: the film is a new reality which must necessarily pose numerous problems on the level of the psychology and philosophy of knowledge (perception, the real and the imaginary, the image, etc . . .). Rather than entrust these questions to the vagaries of some instinctive philosophy, Jean Mitry has preferred to draw on the findings of phenomenology, the theory of form, contemporary scientific epistemology,

and the psycho-physiology of perception, to construct a theory of his own which he intends to develop at greater length in a work in preparation at the moment.[2] This theory grew out of his reflection on the cinema and in return illuminates his conception of the film. While I lack the competence to judge the project in detail, this method of linking the cinema to wider questions cannot be bad in itself, quite the reverse. However, the argument is rather clumsily 'placed' in relation to the general scheme of the work – this lengthy chapter remains a foreign body which *L'Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma* fails to digest. The important ideas it contains have fed the overall work in any case, but their philosophical implications, if they were to truly benefit the reader prepared to engage to some extent in philosophical questions arising out of the cinema, should have been similarly distributed throughout the work; and care should have been taken to see that they were always linked to the particularities of film. They should not have been shut away in the all too imposing ghetto of a chapter formally introduced as philosophical. But this criticism is essentially directed to the *pedagogical* effectiveness of Jean Mitry's book.

On this same level, the rich collection of reflections offered by this author calls up some further reservations, particularly in the second volume. Repetitions, digressions – not to be condemned in themselves, but in this case rather too complacent – and passages that are long-drawn out and dull, sometimes run the risk of exhausting the reader; he may as a result have difficulty reaching the perversely delayed sections of solid and penetrating argument that arise from time to time. The book's general 'plan' is far less clear than the chapter headings would indicate. In some cases very different questions are treated as part of the same discussion;[3] in others, the author's ideas on a particular problem of theory are spread all over the book.[4] This carelessness in exposition doesn't alter the fact that Jean Mitry's book is the first general treatise to be written on the cinema; but it is precisely because this is its nature and gives it its importance, that the author's lack of didactic concern is regrettable, for it may very well prove a problem for those who, already armed with a certain knowledge and having seen a number of films, would like to specialise in the study of the theory of the cinema: quite naturally this book is going to be recommended to them as the first they should read. But these are the quibbles of an academic – let's leave them at that and move to the content of this enormous work.

1. The Modern Cinema

The first body of argument concerns the modern cinema (p 9-61), or 'non-montage' cinema as it was occasionally and rather prematurely called. André Bazin, as is well known, became the self-styled prophet[5] of the new methods of filming. These consisted in avoiding as far as possible any fragmentation of the pro-filmic

reality with a view to its later re-combination through montage, in favour of a more global grasp which was more respectful of the spatio-temporal continuities of the physical world. The long take, sometimes called *plan-sequence*, deep focus (which allowed several motifs or centres of interest to be spaced out along a depth-axis), laterally composed shots (cinemascope and other new techniques of the kind, or more simply a *mise en scène* in width within a standard format frame),[6] camera movement (which brought the possibility of adding new motifs without having to 'cut') – all these are the modalities of that group of technical-aesthetic choices which might be designated globally by the expression 'shooting in continuity' (the continuity in question being both spatial and temporal).

In the forties and fifties many film makers largely yielded to this new aesthetic, and today it is still a stylistic option open to all or part of any film although there seems to be a revival of montage (Alain Resnais, Jean-Luc Godard[7]). In Bazin's work the opposition between shooting in continuity and the more fragmented methods of filming – very much in favour at the end of the silent era, the 'all-powerful montage' (*montage-roi*) epoch (1922-29[8]) in particular – tended to harden into a doctrinaire and sometimes excessive antagonism. For him it was something of a question of cinema versus anti-cinema; filming in continuity was presented as the absolute negation of montage. He equated 'montage' cinema which guides every step of the deciphering process, to a psychological conditioning and enslavement technique categorically opposed in this respect to the cinema of continuity which, like the real, leaves everything to the perception of the spectator; it presents the viewer with a global action, with its depth, breadth and movement, with its interweaving of chains of events, allowing him to choose his own level of reading; it does not impose those exaggerated, imperious and excessive 'fragments' sometimes favoured by the old cinema as so many unequivocal and quasi-linguistic signs.[9]

Drawing back a little from this famous quarrel which has today largely been appeased,* Jean Mitry is quite right to relativise the terms in which it was conducted: the filmic fact, even when it is

* It may appear to have sprung up again in the meantime, but this is not so: it is being re-discussed, which is a different thing altogether. In 1971 there is no major theoretical tendency which envisages the battle on behalf of the 'essence of cinema' to be waged in terms of depth of field versus the fragmentation of takes, or vice versa. True, in an overall sense, montage has returned to favour, but what is really at issue through montage is a concern that the writing process should be marked, a rejection of a deceptive 'transparency'. The montage in question is not therefore necessarily montage in the narrow sense (ie splicing), and does not necessarily exclude long takes. The two 'camps' of that period thus do not have their contemporary equivalents. What does seem to have revived on the other hand is the *interest* in this dispute and what it reveals.

shot in continuity is still an arranged spectacle, a reinterpretation of the real, and has no claim to the chimeric status of a faithful copy; framing, lighting, planned camera movements, the movements of actors, the placing of motifs within the field of vision, the changes of shots which still do take place – all this means that at its core, the modern film sustains the omnipresence of a cinematic construction and *intention*. The only equivalent of the innocence of the real is the real itself which has no double and which has never been an art (p 407). Moreover, the 'freedom' of the spectator faced with a work of art can never consist of a choice *between* the elements of the work, it can only consist in bringing a personal judgment to bear *on* the totality of that work (pp 46, 49, 50). And finally, in the *plan-sequence*, the uniformly clear vision – from two feet to infinity – of a fairly extended field also represents a specifically filmic convention which distances us from the conditions of real perception (p 40).[10]

Jean Mitry goes on to point out that the modern cinema also draws on montage, though generally less frequently: while eg for Eistenstein, montage acted primarily from shot to shot, in the cinema of 'continuity', montage works in complete scenes (p 399). On the other hand, while montage in the narrow sense (ie as an editing splice) has a diminishing importance in certain modern films, in its wider sense of *montage effect* it remains at the basis of all cinema (pp 21, 399). This statement relates to the *logic of implication* which is one of the central ideas in Jean Mitry's aesthetics of the cinema; it is outlined at length in Vol I[11] and subtends many of the analyses of vol II. The primary material of the cinema is a body of fragments of the real world, mediated through the mechanical duplication allowed by photography. It is primarily in the way that it links them and brings them together that the cinema splits itself off from the real world and becomes a discourse on the world.[12] The cinema is above all the site of a vast work of assemblage (p 22). For anyone who keeps this basic function in mind, according to Jean Mitry, the techniques which André Bazin's school opposed to each other so uncompromisingly in terms of montage and non-montage, simply become two different modalities of the montage-effect: in some old films many shots were isolated as a single motif so that the association of two motifs often coincided with an association of two shots (montage in its proper sense, p 21[13]); in passages of films shot in 'continuity', the two motifs would either be linked together by a camera movement (which introduced the second *after* the first, p 22), or simply by their simultaneous presence in the same image (in which case the semantic induction is supported by space, p 21); the first case would be closest in a sense to montage proper since the two elements remain successive, p22.

This viewpoint is without doubt broader and more productive than those which have preceded it: to take an elementary example

of *semantic induction* (an expression which serves as well as 'logic of implication' to designate the same reality[14]): in a *western:* we are shown a stagecoach going through a pass and then a group of Indians high up on the cliff, just watching. The idea of menace and imminent attack, which is not contained in any of the images, is nevertheless clearly communicated to the spectator through what Bela Balasz[15] called the 'current of signification' circulating through the elements of the film, transforming the photographic analagon into a narrative.[16]

But clearly the material modality by which the motif of the stagecoach and that of the Indians is connected is, up to a point, a matter of indifference: whether this is done through montage proper (image 1 – stagecoach, image 2 – Indians), or whether the two elements are present in the same 'shot' (the Indians being introduced by a convenient re-alignment of the camera), the mechanism which presides over the *creation of a supplementary* ie non-photographic – *meaning* is not fundamentally altered.

Nevertheless, this line should not be pursued too far, and Jean Mitry himself draws attention to what is both new and true in the Bazinian analyses (pp 21-22, p 41; cf also p 415): if motifs are brought together by montage, the cinematic intervention has more of an appearance of signs, the relationship of implication is more visibly *generated;* if on the other hand the significative elements are not separated by an editing splice, the spectator has more of an impression that the real itself – ie the diegetic reality is speaking; the relationship is still grasped, but the sign has less of a tendency to swallow up the object, it simply 'planes it down' to use the author's own very apposite expression.

The same discriminating perspective is brought to bear on the question of camera movements (pp 34-40). Nowadays these may appear to be superfluous since any spatial displacement can be produced by montage alone. But montage represents only the final effect of these displacements, it makes them intelligible but it does not produce the perceptible movement of which the change of location is merely the – paradoxically static – result. (It could be said that what disappears with montage is the *trajectory*[17]). Camera movement, on the contrary, surveys space and travels through it in a real sense. Note that on this point Jean Mitry's views coincide with those of Bela Balasz[18] and Marcel Martin.[19]

The author draws up a kind of historical typology of films (pp 35-38, 43-44) in which 'montage' films and films 'shot in continuity' figure as two major modalities of cinematic expression without representing absolute degrees of incompatibility. These two poles, which allow for all the degrees in between, also correspond to two types of spectator *participation.** When the spectator's vision

* A kind of about turn has taken place in film theory on this point in the meantime. Journals like *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Cinéthique* and authors like Marie-Claire Ropars-Wuilleumier (*De la litterature au*

was held on a tight leash by a very controlling (and perceptually very effective) form of montage, the audience willingly allowed itself to be engulfed; the cinema was at first a kind of spell, participation was intense but in part passive, and the film in many cases mobilised the passions of the spectator (pp 43-44). On the other hand it is the spectator's *attention* which is called on when he is confronted with a wider and deeper field of vision demanding a more active deciphering (which can vary to some degree according to the individual viewer); with broad sections of the diegesis presented in a globality which imitates (without ever becoming) the infinite polysemy of the real, which simulates its innocence; allows more distance, and dissimulates the discursive intention behind the evidence of a presence; and when the actuality of the events that emerge is stressed by camera movements which in a sense take place in front of him.[20] On the one hand we have a clear cut fiction, firmly 'encapsulated', and experienced as being in the past, leafed through in one direction from image to image – a series of accomplished actions '*presentified*' by the vision of the film; on the other, an apparently more elusive reality given as if it were just taking place, apparently open to various possibilities, in short actualised by the film. The old film was, above all, presentification; the modern film is, above all, actualisation (pp 37, 443-44).

2. Subjective Images

Jean Mitry then goes on to devote some detailed analyses to the

cinéma, Armand Colin, 1970; *L'Ecran de la mémoire*, Le Seuil, 1970) each in their own way today consider that the 'transparency' of film, or at least a certain kind of transparency, entails in a devious way the alienation of the spectator and a naturalist occultation of the signifier; while on the other hand the act of montage, clearly assumed as an active assertion of the writing process, tends to produce an adult and critical spectator. (See also the notion of *filmic writing* as I have elaborated it in *Langage et Cinéma* [cf S. Heath's *Glossary*, p 240]. Nevertheless, recent theories of writing do not in any way exclude filming in continuity *as such:* it is seen as compatible (depending on the way it is realised) with the work of the film; inversely, 'short' montage is not advocated as an end in itself. André Bazin himself moreover said that 'classic continuity' (*découpage*) (which leaves little room for the long take and in most cases still fragments the shooting) was capable of resulting in a kind of naturalness, effacing the traces of its sutures; while the long take always allowed a *strong montage* in a wider sense, a montage which plays on the gradation of motifs along an axis, movement into and out of the frame, the direction of people's looks, etc. Clearly, therefore, we are not dealing with a term for term inversion (as advocates of a kind of intellectual poujadism like to claim, using this as an argument for discrediting any work of a theoretical nature). Rather, it is one of those vast and complex historical displacements of a problematic (with the element of *supersession* (*Aufhebung*) which this always involves) through which things are able to move and advance.

46 problem of so-called ' subjective ' images (pp 61-79, 138-140), that is, all those images which the film presents as if they translated the view of one of the characters of the story, and not the supposedly ' objective ' state of the diegesis (which is in fact the view of it offered by the film maker since as far as the spectator is concerned this functions as a world initially given and therefore an objective instance[21]). There are several kinds of ' subjective ' images. Firstly, those intended to materialise a purely *mental* image: what a character imagines, dreams, the things he envisages in a state of fear, terror, desire, hope, etc; in short, what he does not *see*. Jean Mitry, who in this respect aligns himself with the view most generally held by film theoreticians, observes that the cinema is not very suited to give a satisfactory translation of these purely ' internal ' views (pp 65, 138-139). The shots which make up the film can only render the visible, and they are helpless in the face of what no one has ever seen. The image which aims at being subjective – at least in this sense – is always experienced by the spectator as objective in the same way as its neighbouring images and because of this it disturbs rather more than it enlightens, for as a view of the real it has no satisfactory meaning in relation to the rest of the film. The cinema is thus too ' real ' to translate effectively the imaginary views of its characters[22]. Besides, ' views ' of this kind are by definition difficult to know in detail, and film makers who undertake to ' render ' them fall consciously into the arbitrary and gratuitous. (One has only to remember all those highly improbable ' dream sequences! ') Even if the *content* of the ' vision ' were knowable and adhered to, Mitry says, its objectification by the filmic image would nonetheless constitute an irrevocable ' betrayal ' since it would divest the imaginary objects – transformed into objects of perception – of that coefficient of felt-absence which is precisely what gives them their whole psychological specificity. For Mitry therefore, the project to *objectify the subjective* faces insurmountable problems and in this respect he clearly distinguishes himself from Bela Balasz[23] and the majority of the ' avant-gardists ' of the twenties.

On the other hand there is another kind of ' subjective ' image for which the cinema is much better equipped: the image obtained by *subjectivising* the objective (pp 65, 76): these are images apparently similar to the rest in that they give a ' realist ' view of the diegetic event and in that capacity show the character himself; but the construction and lines of force of these images (camera angle and camera movement in particular) are contrived in such a way as to involve the spectator – he is implicated in the view of those events (understood as a real, perceptual view) which the character himself has (or is assumed to have): by this process of association the character is therefore present in his own ' vision '. The represented is here given as the real, but its representation is polarised throuh the eyes of one of its participants. Thus in

William Wyler's *Jezebel* Bette Davis is shown expecting a visit from the man she loves. She betrays her impatience by whirling round the drawing room, moving an ornament here and there, rearranging some flowers, etc. The image frames the heroine and is therefore an ' objective ' image – but it follows every step of her nervous and rapid movements, is constantly beside her, circles with her; it it thus by *accompanying* the heroine that the spectator is introduced into the diegetic world and given the sense of entering it with her. This is why Jean Mitry reserves the term *semi-subjective* or *associated* image for images of this kind (pp 77-78).

He also distinguishes them from the properly subjective or (*analytical*) images in which the character himself does not figure, but the audience sees what he sees. These images are often produced in association with the *champ-contrechamp process* (image 1 – the face of the watcher, image 2 – the thing watched) – in fact this marks the limitations of the use of this category of shots: although *champ-contrechamp* in its strict form is not an obligatory correlative of subjective images of this kind, if they are to be correctly understood, they assume the presence of objective shots of the character himself at some not too distant point in the film (p 66). In fact, the spectator is unable to identify temporarily with the character's view unless he is familiar with that character. (Put another way, in order to be able to interiorise a person's *look*, one has to know the *person*.) This explains the failure of Robert Montgomery's *The Lady in the Lake*, a famous and unique[24] attempt at totally subjective cinema (p 66). It will be remembered that the hero never appears in this film, or at least all that is seen of him is what he might see himself during the course of the action: his hands, his forearms, his reflection in mirrors. For the shooting of this film Robert Montgomery wore the camera strapped to his breast so that all the events were presented strictly from the character's viewpoint. The film-maker expected a *total* identification with the hero on the part of the spectator, but this was never achieved because the spectator did not recognise his specular image in the mirrors of the film, did not experience the hands on the screen as belonging to him, and did not – when the character climbed a staircase – experience the feeling that he was climbing those stairs himself, etc. What happens ordinarily in films, and is sometimes called ' identification ', is in reality a temporary association, an act of projection whereby the spectator momentarily mentally accompanies the character (on condition that he has at other moments seen him from outside). Thus in his desire to achieve total identification, the director of *The Lady in the Lake* in fact inhibited that partial association which other films enjoy. Albert Laffay has devoted a particularly brilliant analysis to these phenomena which he concludes in these terms: ' By pursuing an impossible perceptual assimilation, the film (*The Lady in the Lake*) in fact inhibits symbolic identification '.[25] Jean Leirens,[26] Barthélémy

48 Amengual,[27] Marcel Martin,[28] and Jean Masarès[29] had arrived in different ways and with some variations at the same conclusion in relation to Robert Montgomery's film, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty[30] has written in a similar vein on subjective images in general. The subjective image proper (which Jean Mitry calls ' analytical ') is therefore only possible in small doses and in association with objective images. The process is not generalisable.

Jean Mitry puts into a separate class, two special categories of subjective images which the cinema is particularly adept at producing with success. Firstly, those which compose the *imaginary* sphere proper (p 139) to the extent that it can be objectivised *en bloc*. For example: the child's narrative in Antonioni's *The Red Desert* which is a kind of fairy tale – and more generally all films or passages of films which are deliberately ' un-realist ' (legends, fairy stories, films of the *phantastique* genre, etc). For here it is no longer a question of inserting supposedly mental images into a sequence which functions on another level of reality, but of a complete series of images which are definitely given over to a fantasy narrative; within this primary imaginary order all the images become ' objective ' again and thereby homogeneous with one another; the conditions are the same as in most ordinary passages of films (the ' content ' alone is unreal) – and one does not come up against the classic and fairly insurmountable problem of the image's tendency to admit only one level of reality.

The second case which the author sets apart is the image of *memory* (pp 68-71, 107-112, 140, 403, 404) insofar as it is presented in the form of a flash-back commented on by the character who is remembering (a process called the ' speaking first person ' after Jean-Pierre Chartier's decisive study).[31] A flash-back does not of course differ in any respect from the ordinary image and, as has been pointed out, the spectator entering a cinema in the middle of a ' return to the past ' thinks he is seeing the film's present unfolding. The flash-back image is therefore not subjective in itself.[32] But the commentary *in the present* which accompanies it – a kind of materialisation of the act of memory (p 69) – has the effect of setting up a temporal bifurcation which would otherwise be impossible; the image is thus endowed – through the play of reciprocal implications between the said and the seen, the one pushing the other back into the past and into ' the mental ' – with an acceptable equivalent of the scope of memory.[33] (Put another way, the image-strip supplies the content of the memory, while the commentary supplies the intentionality behind the act of remembering so that their total gives a fairly complete effect.) This passage of Jean Mitry's book recalls Albert Laffay's analyses on the ' ultra-photographic interventions ' in film[34] a notion which to some extent overlaps with the ' logic of implication '; it is these interventions which ensure that the cinema is a narrative and not just animated photography and make all the difference between

image and film.

To recapitulate: Jean Mitry finally outlines a very coherent system for the classification of the various so-called subjective images into five major categories: the purely mental image (more or less impracticable in the cinema); the truly subjective or analytical image (ie what is looked at without the person looking), which is practicable in small doses; the semi-subjective or associated image (ie the person looking + what is looked at, which is in fact looked at from the viewpoint of the character looking) – the most generalisable formula; the complete sequence given over to the imaginary, which does not raise special problems; and finally the memory image, which is in principle simply a variety of the mental image but, when presented in the form of a flash-back with commentary, allows for a specific filmic treatment which is far more successful than in the case of other mental images. This 'table' clearly gives a very full account of the various kinds of subjective images presented by modern films and provides an appropriate framework for their analysis; Jean Mitry thus reorganises into an interesting synthesis the most important results of earlier works which are relatively numerous on this subject – those of Jean-Pierre Chartier and Albert Laffay in particular.[35]

III Speech in Film

The author then examines the function of speech in film (p 87-116). He observes that speech provides above all a supplementary index of reality and inevitably contributes – if we set aside the aberrations of the first sound films – to orientating the cinema decisively in the direction of a minimum average 'realism' (p 91). Jean Mitry then argues against the specific and rather dogmatic theories (p 93-96) current in the first few years of sound among upholders of 'cinematic specificity' – nostalgic for the silent film and moreover encouraged in their doctrinaire attitudes by the opposite excesses of pure filmed theatre. These theories are known in the history of the cinema under the title 'the principle of a-synchronism (or 'non-coincidence') between image and sound. The *Manifesto for Orchestral Counterpoint* launched by Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov,[36] along with the writings of René Clair[37] in the same period, were the clearest expression of this tendency; to a large extent it embraced all those who wanted to establish as great as possible a separation between the cinema and the theatre. Even a thoughtful theoretician little given to any blatantly prescriptive aesthetics, like Bela Balasz, continued to give some token support to this *obligatory* a-synchronism some twenty years later.[38]

The thesis is in principal aimed at avoiding *pleonasm* at all costs: anything that the image shows, speech should not say and sound should not suggest. All duplication between visual and

50 auditive effects should be absolutely eliminated. If the diegesis happens to contain some object which emits sound – a car starting up, an audience applauding, etc – the sound should be audible on the sound track only if the image does not show the source of sound. If an orator is delivering a speech which is audible on the sound track, then the image should under no circumstances show the orator, only the silent audience. Numerous examples of these non-coincidence effects will be found in René Clair's *Réflexion Faite*, Bela Balasz's *Theory of the Film*, and V Pudovkin's *On Film Technique*.[39]

In its most extreme form, this attitude was extended to cover all the possible utilisations of speech and sound including the most involved, making an exception only of their most simple and natural uses[40] – for example: showing the person speaking and allowing his words to be heard, or showing a train moving off accompanied by the noise of the engine, etc.

True non-coincidence did occasionally allow for interesting and unforced constructions, like 'framing' the reactions of the listener while the words of the speaker are heard[41]; but in other cases, the systematic application of a-synchronisation culminated in very artificial effects some of which are famous in the history of the cinema: for example, the passage in *Sous les Toits de Paris* by René Clair,[42] where two friends are seen carrying on a conversation behind the glass front of a café without a single word of what they say being audible. On a more general level, the future of the sound film, as subsequent developments were to show, clearly did not lie in the laborious search for such non-coincidence effects, achieved one by one, but in a much more open and global admission of speech into the world of film; present-day films, even those furthest removed from 'filmed theatre' include characters who speak quite naturally even when they feature on the screen and vehicles don't just disappear at the precise moment when their sound becomes audible on the sound track.[43] In most cases, the seen and the heard are associated in the film as they are in life. For the 'pleonasms' which some theoreticians were so anxious to avoid are the currency of everyday perception where audible objects have no spatial extra-territorial privileges in relation to the visual field.

Thus one cannot but welcome Jean Mitry's extremely discerning description of the artificial situation to which the excesses of non-coincidence led at one point (p 95): deliberately rarified sounds and words remained, so to speak, external to the image, content to bring in from outside discontinuous elements of a fragmentary counterpointing; every audible element was more or less 'off'; some so-called 'talking' films were in reality silent films parsimoniously decorated by a few erratic sound motifs; speech was also artificially spaced out (including situations where the characters would logically have had to have a conversation) and

treated like a discontinuous series of brief, spoken subtitles which therefore failed to ' stick ' with the character – the words seemed not to come from the characters' lips, but to remain floating somewhere *alongside* him. (A very fitting description if one thinks of the voice of Albert Préjean in some French films of the period 1930-33.) The actor gave the impression of reciting a sparse and laconic text which cut across the preceding silence producing a minor aesthetic traumatism for the spectator; the result was that this whole system of restraint before the word in fact ended by glorifying speech by its very exclusion. In reality – Jean Mitry rightly stresses this point (p 65) – the theories of non-coincidence masked (and revealed) in its adherents a profound rejection of speech in film – its primary value was that of an evasion. The author thus confirms an idea which I myself developed in a few pages devoted to the future of the sound film.[44]

It is also worth recalling, moreover, that as early as 1932 Rudolf Arnheim took a stand against the dogmatism of a-synchronism[45] and asserted with a very sound understanding of ' prospective ' aesthetics, that the future of the sound cinema could not be confined within a small number of localised ' effects '. He went on to claim that ' parallelism ' (ie the fact of seeing the source of a sound at the same time as hearing the sound) was the natural solution for most passages of film. Moreover *parallelism did not mean pleonasm* and setting a-synchronism and pleonasm up as opposing alternatives was a trap to be avoided: the film character could very well present us with two sets of information at the same time, one by what he said (sound-track) and the other by his facial expression (image strip). Speaking in more general terms Rudolf Arnheim asserted that ' parallelism ' and ' counterpointing ' were compatible.[46]

The theory of ' counterpoint ' – where counterpoint is seen in broad and active terms which do not exclude ' parallelism ' – is what Jean Mitry turns his attention to next (p 96-99). He examines the problem not in terms of synchronism as opposed to a-synchronism, but of the constant interaction between the visual and the verbal. The continuity of the film is most commonly ensured by the visual element[47] which provides the intelligible link between one ' shot ' and the next; but the final signification of the shot is the effect of the intertwining of image and dialogue – a form of montage in the broad sense; the ideal and theoretical mechanism is such that the visual contribution proper of shot 2 is linked onto the global (ie audio-visual) sense of shot 1, and then the visual contribution proper of shot 3 is linked onto the global sense of shot 2, etc. The linguistic statements of the character in the film do not form direct links in a chain; each of them is primarily related to the concomitant visual given; dialogues are often fragmentary or incomplete, there are many moments of silence (landscape scenes, etc) and the cinema has no equivalent of the con-

tinuous text of the theatre, if we discount as irrelevant the tracks of pure ' filmed theatre '.[48] Films are authentically ' cinematic ' not according to the *quantity* of words exchanged, but according to the *status* of speech in relation to the overall scheme of the elements which compose it (p 99).

Jean Mitry then introduces a distinction between ' stage dialogue ' and ' behavioural dialogue ' (p 99-100). The former is a property of the theatre where it is the law; it consists in making the dramatic facts themselves explicit through speech, ie in constantly speaking of precisely that which is most fundamentally at issue. The second is a property of the cinema and everyday life[49]; this kind of speech is expressive as well as significative[50] and revealing beyond what it actually says (sometimes revealing something other than what it says); in this kind of speech the character betrays what he is inasmuch as he does not say what he means; it tells something about the person in the same way that his face, bearing, clothes, actions and social setting do, and it is equally sustained by asides and remarks on the weather. It might be called a sort of ' lost ' speech of everyday life, and the cinema which has for some time now been seen as phenomenological and behaviourist art,[51] lends itself especially to the use of this speech-in-the-world without thereby excluding all ' stage dialogue ' (p 100). For there are in fact moments when ' stage dialogue ' is justified by the plot, just as there are moments in life when one is led to *really explain oneself* and to utter theatrical texts in a natural way (for example in certain crucial conversations and a great number of arguments).

Nevertheless these occasions are not frequent in daily life where speech usually plays the ambiguous role which Jean Mitry ascribes to ' behavioural dialogue '. In taking this position Jean Mitry adds his analyses to the existing catalogue of a widely held view which opposes the theatre to the cinema as an art of the true to an art of the real. This immediately perceptible difference could possibly be expressed another way. In the first place, in my view the theatre play has a text, while the film does not[52] – at least if we take the notion of text in its strict and most simple sense as a continuous verbal tissue, a tight contexture which forms a totality sufficient unto itself. Certain films integrate fragments of texts (like the lyrical recitatives of Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima Mon Amour*), but none[53] is based on a continuous *text* co-extensive with the complete work; whereas in the theatre this is the usual thing. *The true text in the cinema is the image-strip.*[54]* The film has speech at its disposal but it does not – at least not yet – have the text.

* In the way that I at that time summed up this quasi-affirmation of Jean Mitry's allowance has to be made for a slightly aggressive concern to assert the ' difference ' of the cinema *as opposed to the theatre.* All in all, two things need to be distinguished: the absence in the cinema of a *continuous linguistic text* comparable to that of traditional theatre is for the moment an accepted fact; but it does not

Neither does it have the Word and this is its second distinction from the theatre. The speech of the theatre is the Word: for in the theatre the Word is supreme and *creates* the diegesis, the decor being too poor to sustain the dramatic fiction alone. The cinematic speech on the other hand is not the Word, as it is subordinate in the cinema, and forms *a part* of the diegesis, that quasi-real fictional world which is nourished above all by the richness of the images.

André Malraux distinguished three kinds of dialogue.[55] Firstly, expository dialogue which aims at letting the audience know the initial facts of the action. A frequent custom in the theatre, this process is avoided by the novel and the cinema which can replace it with (visual or verbal) narrative. Secondly, the ' dialogue of mood ' where the character reveals certain aspects of his personality through the particular resonance of his words (examples: Legrandin or Charlus in Proust). In essence, therefore the latter is what Jean Mitry calls ' behavioural dialogue ', but André Malraux considers that both the theatre *and the cinema* avoid this kind of dialogue (which the novel could not do without) because these arts are able to show the *aspect* of the character. For Jean Mitry this visual contribution does not prevent behavioural dialogue from playing a most important role in the cinema, precisely because it is *a part* of the aspect of the character. For him this kind of speech belongs to the image as its human sound – the murmur of the character.[56] Finally ' stage dialogue ' – Malraux uses the same expression to designate the same thing, and also observes that this kind of dialogue is the permanent law of the theatre. (This could be put a different way by saying that it is the theatre's tightest *technical constraint* since on stage the most explicit information needed by the spectator on the facts of the drama has to be conveyed by the linguistic utterances put into the mouths of the protagonists). In the novel and the film, André Malraux asserts, stage dialogue is a more discontinuous usage; the work ' changes over to dialogue ' when the occasion demands – the rest of the time its development is directly assumed by the author/film-maker himself; ie the passages out of quotation marks in the novel, the purely visual passages in the film.

Thus both André Malraux and Jean Mitry assert the profound relationship between novel and film, both narrative genres which integrate *dramatic moments* in a fragmentary way, where for the

follow from this that the cinema presents us only with images. The ' text ' of the cinema, in the wider sense which I have attempted to elaborate in *Langage et cinéma* – in other words, the homologue in the cinema of what the painting is to pictorial art, the statue to sculpture – is the *film;* the film as a concrete progression, a perceptible and integral unfolding of images, but also spoken words (even if they are discontinuous), noises, music, written language.

theatre these are the whole work.

Bela Balasz had already shown[57] how the film – apparently the twin of the theatre play (since in both cases the events are presented in the act of happening, and their development is in some way mimed on the spot by the protagonists themselves) – through its image-strip, is in fact closer to the novel; an invisible narrator who closely resembles the novelist and like him is external to the facts he relates, unfolds the image-strip before the eyes of the spectator, just as the novel's narrative orders sentences which go directly from author to reader. Albert Laffay observed that the speech of the theatre basically admits of one status only and is *always dialogue* whereas the novel and the film dispose of three kinds of 'speech'[58]: speeches pronounced by the characters (ie 'dialogue'); words which translate the thoughts of the characters (ie internal monologue in the novel, the 'speaking first person' in the film); the words of the author/film-maker (passages out of quotation marks in the novel, and in the film – the commentary of anonymous speakers external to the action, not forgetting the image-strip as a whole, since this necessarily relates back to a 'great image-maker', a 'master of ceremonies' who is the only 'virtual linguistic centre of the whole film'.[58] Jean Mitry arrives at very similar conclusions (p 113) on the equivalences between various kinds of 'speech' in the novel and the film.

On a more sociological level, the weighty dossier on 'the cinema and the novel' should also include analyses by André Bazin, Jean Giraudoux, Claude-Edmonde Magny, and Jean Deprun on the basically solitary nature of the consumption of film, as opposed to the social and almost civic display that presides over the collective consumption of the play. The writings of Francois-Régis Bastide and Edgar Morin on the social function of the cinema (school of life, permanent initiatory source, store of models for private behaviour, constant partner in the secret life of the emotions) – a central and multiform function very close to that played by the novel in its great classical period – should also be included here; they make an essential contribution to an understanding of the profound links between the novel and the cinema[59] which have continued to assert themselves over the years. These links do not however prevent (but rather encourage, by settling old disputes) productive and less basic interchanges,[60] between the best of contemporary theatre and cinema.

IV Film Music

Jean Mitry goes on to broach the problem raised by film music (pp 116-124). He bases himself essentially on the well-known studies carried out by Maurice Jaubert[61] the authority on which the majority of film theoreticians dealing with this subject have drawn and developed. To recall the essence of Jaubert's ideas:

bad film music – far and away the most general – comments the action without a break and aims to illustrate the *content* through a whole system of rather trivial pleonastic equivalents; these have progressively led to a kind of musico-cinematic language in which music sheds its dignity altogether and strives to mimic various ' states of mind ' in an anecdotal fashion (violin glissandoes for love scenes, cataclysmic brass and percussion for attacks and pursuits, etc). The role of music in film should be rather to intervene intermittently only, and to interact with the images, not from any concern to imitate, but in order to make more explicit, not a dramatic fact, but an audio-visual *rhythm*.[62]

Jean Mitry brings a certain amount of detail to bear on this thesis, with which he is basically in agreement. He sets out to refute the rather muddled notion of ' counterpoint ' between image and music (pp 118-119): the term ' counterpoint ' has a precise meaning only in the theory of music and could not be exported into the cinema except in an altered form. Those who speak of counterpoint between image and music have in mind an interaction between two *meanings* – two emotions, two moods, etc – whereas in music, counterpoint sets in play not meanings directly but tones, rhythms, and timbres. Moreover, the adherents of ' counterpoint ' generally have in mind some kind of *contrast* between the image and the music (so that the word ' contrast ' would in fact better express what they are aiming at) while musical counterpoint allows for a variety of combinations – reversals, oppositions, parallelisms, etc – only some of which could be described as contrasts.

This clarification is both necessary and overdue, but it should not deflect attention from Pierre Schaeffer's specific propositions[63] towards a classification of the possible interactions between music and image into four categories (' masks ', ' opposition ', ' synchronism ', ' syntony ').

On the other hand Mitry usefully extends (pp 116-117) the theory generally used to explain the fact that film screenings in the first days of cinematography were accompanied by music (ie the role of the silent cinema pianist). Authors agree in considering that the sound accompaniment fulfilled two functions: on the one hand it covered the noises in the auditorium (especially the sound of the projector which was anything but discreet in the early days of cinema); on the other, it created a suitable atmosphere for a good psychological reception of the film; it conditioned the audience for their admission into a dream world and set the cinema into a sound-box which isolated it from the real world, thereby encouraging the transfer of perceptions required of the spectator. While not denying the importance of these two factors, Jean Mitry does not see them as the essence of the problem. He takes into consideration the fact that the impression of reality produced by the silent film was much weaker than that of the contemporary film.

56 An absence of speech, a dramatic structure which functioned through juxtaposed ' scenes ' crudely separated by inter-titles, the rigidity of the camera in the early stages, etc all militated against any real sense of temporality; the time of the diegesis was *understood* through inferences based on the logic of the plot, not experienced. What was lacking was a *common measure* between diegetic time and ' primary ' time, ie that of the spectator himself for the duration of the projection. The function of the music was precisely to provide this measure in the form of a lived-time which linked the time of the representation (which it filled without pause) and the time of the represented (to which it ' hooked ' as best it could successive themes adapted in varying degrees to the different episodes of the film). This is undoubtedly a new and interesting analysis whose corollary is that music, especially as an uninterrupted series, is much less necessary to the modern film, which has at its disposal speech and real noises, as well as image constructions more suited to suggesting the flow of time (montage effects, camera movements, dissolves, etc). This would seem to account for the less frequent use of music in modern films a fact which is not easy to document.

Regrettably, the author did not feel it worthwhile determining what the soundtrack in general – with its three elements: speech, noise and music – has contributed to the impression of reality given by films.[64] It seems possible in fact to classify the *indexes of reality*[65] contained in the sound film into two major categories in terms of a very simple psychological criterion: on the one hand there are the real data for which the film reproduces an incomplete perception (respecting the visual appearance of objects – or more generally, bodies – but not their tactile reality or solidity, etc); and on the other hand the data whose perception is as rich in the cinema as in life and which therefore enter the film without an amputation of one of their phenomenal dimensions; these are (1) the visible *movement* of bodies; and (2) the set of auditive data. The contemporary film is able to give a measure of credibility to its diegesis because it *inflates* the *effigies* of bodies presented (ie graphic outline and possibly colour alone) with all the true reality of real movement and real sound.[66] The crucial bipartition for the psychology of filmic perception is therefore not between the visual and the auditive, but between incomplete reproduction and complete duplication, the latter combining the visual movement given with the auditive data. When Bela Balasz remarked that sound does not have an image[67] he was on the threshold of a very important observation which only takes on its full meaning in the more general framework just outlined.

V Colour in the Film

Mitry then turns his attention to the question of colour (pp 124-

140). In principle, colour constitutes a supplementary index of reality (since the world is coloured); in fact it contributed to undermining the spectator's credibility as long as it consisted (owing to certain still unresolved technical problems) of the unreal hotchpotch produced by crudely contrasted monochrome washes lacking in any kind of depth; this transformed the film into a kind of epinal-picture[68] effect suited only to a particular genre of *illuminated-film* (eg Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*, Jean Renoir's *The Golden Coach* . . .), the film fairy tale and to some extent the 'musical'. But in 1953 Japanese Eastmancolour made its appearance (*Gates of Hell* by Kinugasa), a technique which allowed for more subtle gradations and which, given the mechanics of competition, provoked the perfecting of other processes (Technicolor, etc). The reign of the coloured film thus gave way to the film in colour (pp 127-128).

This does not imply that the chromatic possibilities of the cinema have to be absorbed by the realist function and confined to the role of 'real colour'. Any of the re-interpretations with which art begins are both possible and desirable, although these days they are rarely attempted in the field of filmic colour. But the motley productions of twenty years ago were enforced stylisations, stylisations by default and the simple correlative of a technical lack. The true stylisations which can be envisaged now assume first of all that the tool has been perfected (and that it is also capable of serving the realist cause). Thus Jean Mitry rightly reacts against (p 127) a position which has not lacked adherents in film aesthetics – from Rudolf Arnheim to J-R Debrix passing through Henri Agel among others.[69] This trend tends to be rather too anxious to keep the co-efficient of artistic creativity confined within the bounds of a required non-realism which is secretly hostile to every technical advance which the cinema machine achieves in the direction of a more complete reproduction of the perceptual appearances of life. If Etienne Souriau[70] was right and art's success is measured by its ability to turn poverty into riches, this important law does not entail a rejection of new riches which makes such an aesthetic increase more difficult (in the hope that by continuing to begin from the same low point one will be credited with the same difference if the achievement is no greater). On the contrary, it implies taking advantage of the surplus of initial riches in order to carry the ultimate goal in view that much higher than before – a principle which the film-makers who in recent years shot their first feature length colour film have loyally attempted to follow (Federico Fellini: *Juliet of the Spirits*, Michelangelo Antonioni: *The Red Desert*, Alain Resnais: *Muriel*, etc). The dialectics between the initial riches of the material of representation and the final effectiveness of the world represented seem to account for the reactions – both positive and negative – which have greeted the advent of speech, colour, cinemascope, etc throughout the history of the

Jean Mitry also devotes a very full chapter (pp 130-140) to the problem of colour symbolism in film on which Eisenstein – whom the author cites, amplifying a great many of his points – made an important contribution.[71] The psycho-physiology of colour sensations has demonstrated that there are, up to a point, certain stable and natural correlatives between colours and ' affective categories ' (the term used by Mikel Dufrenne) or ' abstracts of emotional categories ' (the term used by Etienne Souriau). However the way that colour symbolism functions in societies is largely the result of socio-cultural codifications which take considerable liberty with the natural correspondences in favour of a set of conventions built on detailed and arbitrary decisions. As far as the work of art is concerned, colour is not an external application of the social code or of the natural equivalents; the signification of colours in art – and not just in art one might add – is not in essence bound to an analogical relationship between each colour and each 'feeling', it is rather linked to an overall homology which distributes several colours over several feelings.[72] What signifies in art therefore is the relationship between the colours. Every work of art has to create its own signifying homologies in close association with its diegesis (at least in the representative arts where colour is always the colour of something). A play of colours of the ' pure art ' kind in a film which is otherwise still a narrative must inevitably introduce a bifurcation of meaning which prejudices the organic unity of the work; for the significations of the plot would still form its series *alongside* the combinations of colour. The signifying relations of colour therefore have to emerge from the total work, ie they have to be *implicated* in it, not *applied* to it (p 134). To this extent the signification of colours in the cinema is always *motivated* and in some sense ' natural '.

This remains true I would add even where the homology constructed by the artist coincides or overlaps with broad sections of a socially accepted colour symbolism – given a variable margin of play. It is by no means certain – and this point applies not just to the question of colour – that the creative process characteristic of the aesthetic enterprise is necessarily linked to absolute freedom. Social codes of all kinds find in art, not the site of their absence, but the site of their warping and twisting and if we accept that the artist is able to take some distance in relation to the socio-cultural conventions it is precisely *in relation to* them that he takes that distance and his ultimate ' originality ' always bears a (possibly distorted or inverted) trace of what it has been wrested from.

VI Audio-visual Films Proper

Jean Mitry devotes a separate chapter (pp 141-166) to films whose composition was conceived in close relationship with a piece of

music. These are usually poetic films without a plot, but sometimes also sequences in a narrative film; for example: the famous and much-discussed sequence of the battle on the ice in *Alexander Nevsky* by Eisenstein and Prokofiev.[73]

If this cinematic genre were to be established and developed it would constitute an audio-visual art proper. The enterprise has been broached in different ways during the course of the history of the cinema. In some cases, the image-strip consisted of non-figurative motifs – pure forms with or without colours – as in the case of the 'abstracts' of the cinematic avant-garde (Oskar Fischinger, Len Lye, Norman MacLaren). Jean Mitry expresses some scepticism on the reality of these 'visual rhythms' which are sustained only by virtue of the music recorded on the sound track. (The author dealt with this problem of visual rhythm at length in his first volume[74]). Other film-makers have chosen the 'figurative' path (eg Germaine Dulac), but have not always avoided the danger this entails: they have often lapsed into the anecdotal and engaged in *illustrating* through images (assumed to be appropriate) the *visual theme* (assumed to exist) in the music; ie images of showers of water on a lawn to illustrate a piece of music thought of as aquatic, etc. This method involves giving the music an inappropriate and superfluous 'complement', reducing the image to the role of an accompaniment, and finally is only concerned with that element of the music which is not music, ie the motif and not the work.

Eisenstein showed clearly[75] that the problem was not just one of blindly coupling 'contents' as irreconcilable as those of music and the image, but of retracing a common denominator which could only be found in the structure of the composition, in other words, in the visual or musical 'movement'. But the painter in him made the mistake of relying too much on the spatial lines of force in a single and static image; and in the case of the one image, the sweep of the spectator's eye – which could not have been plotted in advance in its order – failed to provide a rigorous equivalent to the always sequential movement of the music, whatever the Russian film-maker may have said on the subject. In Jean Mitry's view it is therefore only at the level of the *sequence* that the audio-visual structure has some chance of being imposed. Eisenstein himself successfully adopted this solution in some passages of *Alexander Nevsky*.

A path somewhere in between the gratuitous developments of abstract rhythms and the poverty of the anecdotal illustration method was found by Alexeieff in his famous *Night on Bare Mountain* which he made with the aid of a pin-screen[76]: he produced vague and ghost-like forms which were nevertheless evocative and sufficiently mobile and agile to blend with the rhythm of the music.

Jean Mitry finally explains his own intentions in making the audio-

 visual essays *Images pour Debussy* (1951) and *Pacific 231* (1949) He chose images from the real world (eg views of sheets of water in *Images pour Debussy*), but the intention was not to assemble a narrative or a sequential representation, nor to present these images as illustrations of some visual theme thought to be present in Debussy's music. Jean Mitry was concerned with a poetic meditation on the theme of water in the course of which the interlacing montage was to progressively 'dematerialise' the given fact (ie the images of water) and little by little to isolate out an ontological theme concerned with fundamental fluidity and mobility. Debussy's music was neither accompanied nor accompaniment. It was the essential rhythmic catalyst of a construction in images – the structural auxiliary which entered the image to give form and architecture to a project which was poetic in the true sense of the word. Here the film-maker, instead of erecting a world (as does the film-novel) offers his view of the real world (as does the poet); the images reject any principle which would link them anecdotally and combine only in response to correspondences and profound analogies which the mind experiences as a demand for a deciphering emanating from the real world itself.[77] Jean Mitry expresses some doubt as to whether he succeeded in his intentions on all points. It will be remembered however that his film aroused the interest of specialists, and in the very spirit of the project – the idea of deciphering, of profound analogies in the physical world, etc – there is something rather Proustien, which makes further praise unnecessary.

VII The Progressive Rejection of the Theatrical Formula in the Cinema

Pp 281-329 ('From Filmed Theatre to Visual Expression') offer a considered history of the beginnings of the cinema. In the first volume the author twice devoted space to such recapitulations, once on the subject of the cinema of visual expression (pp 217-247), and once on the cinema of rhythm (pp 329-346).

Each of these historical reviews has therefore concerned a particular tendency which has arisen in the course of the development of film forms. It is a well-established fact that before the cinema began to find itself as cinema, it underwent, successively or simultaneously, three major temptations: from painting, music and theatre. On this occasion it is the third of these that the author deals with, but the argument is broader than in the first two cases since practically all the films of the early period – and a lot of those that followed – were marked by the influence of the theatre; in fact the history of the progressive rejection of its hold is almost co-extensive with the general history of the cinema in its early

stages. But the author is not concerned with outlining a total view which would have required a much fuller development on a subject such as this; he simply seeks – sometimes with less clarity of detail than might be desired – to situate the principal phases of the vast historical movement by which the cinema 'liberated' itself from the theatre.

The general idea is very clear: it consists in distinguishing the *dramaturgy* of the film from its *mise en scène* (p 317). The term dramaturgy is used to designate the conception of the scenario itself, ie the structure of the filmic narrative; by *mise en scène* is meant the translation into images at every moment of the narration. On the latter level, the cinema had thrown off the theatre's influence even before the end of the silent era; on the former, it is on the contrary, hardly beginning to free itself even now.

The *mise en scène* of the early films was purely theatrical: a stationary camera, a fixed focal distance, a uniformly frontal camera angle, always at the height of the chest or the eye, etc – the viewpoint of the 'gentleman in the orchestra stalls' to use Georges Sadoul's famous expression.[78] With the advances in visual expression (montage, camera movement, close up, variation in scale and angle, etc) this aesthetic was soon superseded. This major development has already been observed, though in a much less detailed way, by a great many theoreticians – Rudolf Arnheim,[79] Bela Balasz,[80] André Malraux[81] and Edgar Morin[82]. (See also Vol 1 pp 269, 283.)

However, it is on the question of dramaturgy that the author makes his newest contributions. He stresses convincingly and with the support of examples that a camera which was to a large extent 'liberated' and already equipped with an almost modern mobility could still go on illustrating narratives which were theatrical in conception. True, after a few years of cinematic practice, the locations and times of the action had become far more varied and numerous than in the majority of theatre plays, but the film was still divided into a number of self-enclosed moments relentlessly separated from one another, each of them representing something close to a 'scene'. The film for a long time remained a succession of moments and a succession or a simultaneity of locations (pp 308-309). The situation was largely perpetuated by the sound cinema, and has far from disappeared today.

This is why the majority of films were for such a long time either tragedies or melodramas. Even where there was nothing particularly tragic contained in the facts of the narrative the events took on an air of inevitability and fatality; they were never shown in terms of any flexible and uncertain development. Instead they were presented as a series of transversal slices which contained only the result of the process, divorced from any continuous view of the events leading up to it. This was the reign of the accomplished fact; the most banal event can take on an air of tragedy

62 as soon as one is shut off from its preceding phases holding constant possibilities of bifurcation (pp 308-309).

This is why the cinema was an art of space before it was an art of time (pp 311-313). It was frankly easier: the image alone sufficed – on condition that it was mixed with a little poetry and breadth – to open up vistas onto the spaces of the physical world. Wide landscapes, distances, vast horizons, the seasons and the elements were the first ' beauties ' of the art of film, as well as the first instruments of its emancipation from the theatre. But the conquest of time – ie of time as something more than a simple ' temporal span ' (pp 311-312) – poses problems of a different kind of complexity; the image alone is no longer enough – it requires a calculated combination of the filmic discourse, with its particular forms of montage (flash-back, a-chronological montage, etc), a much longer running time (the first films lasted only a few minutes), and the indispensible adjunct of speech. To these three factors (p 345) I would add a fourth: the judicial use of particular optical effects, ie elements which are visual but not photographic such as the dissolve. Though somewhat decried at the moment, the dissolve is endowed with undeniable aptitude for suggesting temporal transitions. (For example in a frequentative montage,[83] which is extremely adept at showing long or monotonous actions with brevity while making their duration or monotony felt. It would be very difficult to realise this without the help of the dissolve.)

Jean Mitry concludes that for the film to move away from the theatre towards the novel and take what is today its main route, film for a long time lacked one essential aspect: a sense of real time with all its multiple corollaries (the ability to follow psychological changes, to convey the sense of what is called ' interiority ', etc).

What should have been given greater emphasis perhaps was that if the cinema resembled the theatre for a long time, this was not simply because superficially they both had common links with the category of the *spectacle*. The reason was rather that the cinema is at first sight a *dramatic* art and the theatre is therefore what it resembles if not most, then at least most visibly. The term ' dramatic ' should here be taken in its strictest and most simple sense: like the theatre the cinema is *action* before it is a *narrative* – the fiction is presented in acts, mimed by the participants themselves, and not related by a narrator external to the action. ' Dramatic ' in this sense is therefore opposed to *epic* (ie to the *epos* or the novel). It has taken the cinema a long time to become aware of its epic vocation, which seems so obvious today, because the fact that the discourse in images is in some way the equivalent of a narration like the one woven by the words of the novelist is something that could not have been apparent from the start. It was only natural that the image was first seen as a convenient way of recording short sketches.

Abandoning the diachronic point of view, Jean Mitry goes on to make a structural comparison between the cinema and the theatre. In essence he underwrites André Bazin's famous analyses on this question.[84] Bazin distinguished between the 'dramatic' and the 'theatrical': for him the dramatic was an aesthetic category which found its fullest realisation in the theatre, but which also manifested itself in some threequarters of the films made and half the novels written. The theatrical on the other hand is what makes the theatre, and for Bazin this was completely located in the text, the shield of noble metal which protected the play against alteration for as long as it was respected.[85]

In Bazin's view the main difference between the theatre and the cinema was not constituted by the presence of the actor in the theatre – he saw the photographic presence as being almost as effective (by other means) as the real presence. What he saw as profoundly different in the two arts was the text spoken by the actors. The theatre has a text that is stylised, artificial, often true, but never real; the cinema on the other hand has a humbler speech, more everyday and 'natural'.[86] He saw the theatrical text as appropriate only to the mystical enclosure in which the great ritual act is played out; in other words, to the consecrated ground of the stage which is a centripetal space whose walls – not forgetting the fourth living wall of an attentive and implicated public – act like reflecting mirrors, echoing the sovereign word and endowing it with demiurgical powers. The speech of the cinema was appropriate only for the indefinite, immense and centrifugal space of the filmic world, extraordinarily adept at opening in all directions but incapable of enclosing – a profane and wordly space which is nature and not a sanctuary.[87] Albert Laffay supports Bazin's views at least on the analysis of filmic space[88] and the comparisons between the theatrical word and cinematic speech.[89]

Jean Mitry accepts Bazin's by now classic concept, but corrects it on one important point. He is more faithful than Bazin to the teaching of Henri Gouhier[90] and accords a greater role to the physical presence of the theatre actor and to the semi-absence of the cinema actor (pp 336-377).

The theatre is made of a vivid contrast between the poverty of its decor, which is often reduced to a few conventional indications, and the supra-active presence of the interpreter. The theatre actor is not in the same space as the decor, he is in the same space as the spectator whose attention he polarises on himself and himself alone. In the cinema, the actor is still 'present' in a way, but not to a greater degree than the world around him, since the presence of both is composed of spots of light on a screen. The actor is not in the same space as the spectator, but in the same space as his decor; and the latter is not just decor, it is the world of that

character. It is a characteristic of the cinema always to present its characters in situation.[91]

Jean Mitry's proposition could, it seems, be taken further than he takes it himself. To do this it would be necessary to define more closely the notions of ' decor ' and ' diegesis '. Perhaps it is only possible to speak of decor when designating a set of signs, indications or props which are not on the same level of reality as the person (or action) they surround. A decor is always something of a frame, and in this sense *there is no decor in the cinema.*[92] In the same way, the notion of diegesis as it has been defined by filmology is only appropriate to a designation of a complete universe whose every element – persons, actions, locations, times, objects – are on the same level of reality (photographic reality in the case of the cinema, verbal in the case of the novel). In this sense, *there is no diegesis in the theatre* – the theatre play is an *action* in a *decor*, the film and the novel are homogeneous *pseudo-worlds.*

Returning to Jean Mitry, he concludes the preceding argument with a strong opposition between the mode of presence of the theatre actor, and that of the cinema actor (pp 336-337). The presence of the latter is that of the character and the world; the presence of the former is that of the actor and the word, and also that of the dramatic fiction which has only the actor to sustain it. In the theatre, the living body of the actor, his physical action, are the only links binding the spectator to the fiction; and the theatre actor is more than just the speaker of the text, he also assumes a speech and incarnates the Word, lends his voice and his body to the words conceived by the playwright. Note that on this point Albert Laffay,[93] Jean Girardoux[94] and Rosenkrantz[95] who stressed the importance of the reciprocal presence of the actor and the audience during the stage presentation, are all closer to Jean Mitry and Henri Gouhier than to Bazin, but the divergence between these two groups of opinions is perhaps not as sharp as it seems at first. It is true that Bazin tended to minimise the difference between the physical presence and the photographic presence; he had a theory of the action of ' play ' in the theatre[96] which led him by different routes to the same conclusions; he held that in the theatre the two parties (the actor and the audience) are in complicity and celebrate together a conscious and ludic rite. In the cinema, the solitary, hidden and anonymous spectator is present at a spectacle which ignores his presence. He feels as if he has just dropped in on it. In short, the importance which Bazin refused to allow to the *physical* presence of the actor himself, he accords instead to the playing out, ie to the *voluntary* presence of *both* the actor and the audience.

Thus the major theoreticians agree in stressing the fundamental differences which separate the cinema from the theatre – while the *metteurs en scène* over the last fifteen years, consider that the

gulf between them is narrowing all the time. These two viewpoints are again not as opposed as they might seem, for they are situated at a different level of the problem: what strikes the *metteurs en scène* in their preoccupation with concrete productions are all the ways in which, in practice cinematic techniques can be used in the theatre and the reverse (projections of film sequences incorporated into dramatic performances, stage recitation as part of the commentary of a film, the use of lighting to create several spaces and several 'surfaces' within one theatrical stage, etc).[97] These exchanges cannot but benefit both arts but they do not alter the fact that while there is perhaps no 'eternal and immutable essence' of the cinema as opposed to the theatre (to quote a formula which certain *metteurs en scène* have attributed to theoreticians in order the more successfully to refute them[98]), there is at least a psycho-aesthetic conditioning of each art by the technical constraints which define and constitute them (the physical presence of the actor as against the animated image, enclosed space as against open space, and other phenomena of the same kind which cannot be transcended without some qualitative change).

The theatre is an art of representation, the cinema an art of presentation. This distinction was advanced by Mikel Dufrenne in his *Phénoménologie de l'Expérience Esthétique*[99]: in the theatre the execution of the work comes *afterwards*, and each representation is an artistic act. (In this respect the theatre is like music.) In the cinema the execution comes *before*. When the film is completed, each of its showings, far from being a new execution, is reduced to an extra presentation of the unique execution of the work recorded. (In this respect the cinema is like painting.) Jean Mitry takes up this distinction but gives it some new amplifications (pp 434-435). It might be expected that the sensation of the real present would be stronger in the theatre since each presentation of the work is an actual execution and the interpretation is never completely identical from one evening to the next. But this *renewal of the presentation*, which has no equivalent in the cinema, on the contrary has the effect of underlining the adopted artifice which is the foundation of the theatre; the differences in interpretation from one performance to the next confine themselves in spite of everything to minor variations around one basic scheme which always resembles itself; it is the function of the theatre actor to repeat the same thing evening after evening, so that the work is always already finished before it is begun and every theatrical play has something of the tragedy about it – it is a discourse on the past closed in upon itself. A film on the contrary, even if shown a thousand times over, never confronts us with some arbitrary 'one' out of innumerable similar appearances by the actor. He has played his role once and once only, and played it *in the present*. It may have been fifteen years ago, but that

 present was permanently fixed on celluloid and the truth of the observation that a film is presented (and not represented) lies in the fact that at each new projection this past becomes present again; and it is reactualised with what there was of the unforseeable in it; for the recording strip has registered *everything*, including the mysterious surge of life that marked that performance and was imprisoned with the rest which from then on could be made to reappear on demand: ' At each projection, the cowboy will meet the stagecoach at the appointed time, but even if it is known in advance, the moment when he receives the fatal bullet will nevertheless always denounce the presence of an unforseeable destiny which is also a prisoner of the images ' (p 435). Note that in this respect, too, the film is more like the novel than the play.

IX Cinema and Novel

It is in fact to the cinema and the novel that Jean Mitry devotes the following discussion (pp 343-368). In the novel, space is abstract since it is signified purely by words, but time is intensely felt since it has on its side the sequentiality of the work and the duration of the reading. The film is also a chain, so that time *could* be as felt as in the novel, and moreover it occasionally is in the best of modern films. But such a result is more difficult to achieve than the consecutive nature of the film strip would lead one to suppose. In fact space in the film (unlike in the novel) is not an abstraction; it is open to perception. In the cinema space comes *before* time, a fact which can be clearly observed from the stationary shot or the appearance of the first image of a film on the screen. There is nothing about this precedence of space which in principle militates against a perceptible development of time; on the contrary it can offer a support for such an unfolding. As in life, time in the cinema is always relative to a space (for example, movement) and it is the image itself which is drawn along in time constantly modifying its space as we watch. However, the precedence of space has a tendency to freeze time into inertia (the case for example with ' beautiful images '). The obligatory presence of space encumbers time, which is therefore less pliable than in a novel, for the film-maker who wishes to displace time has the additional task of displacing space (example: the flash-back). Thus the novel which has time at the outset, strives towards space, while the film has space at the outset and strives towards time (p 354). ' The novel is a narrative which organises itself into a world, the film is a world which organises itself into a narrative ' (*ibid*). Note that the second part of Jean Mitry's statement coincides with one of the theses central to Albert Laffay's *Logique du Cinéma*.[100]

In the cinema, as in life, time is never *perceived;* it is space which is perceived, and time is perceived as a spatial change. Time

is only perceived directly when it is empty (waiting, boredom, etc). In ordinary circumstances time cannot be perceived because it is the very location of our perception (duration is simply ' the permanence of a relationship between the world and myself ' p 355). Only the present exists, the past no longer exists, the future has yet to exist. The filmic image, like life, is always in the present. Duration, however, becomes perceptible when it is ' experienced ', ie when a present moment is placed in relationship with a past moment where things were not as they are at this moment. This is a relationship which always has something of the *external* in it because even where our own past is concerned, our past is no longer us. (In this sense so-called ' subjective ' time – vital time, novelesque time etc – preserves something of the ' objective ' and the psychology of time is to a large extent the psychology of memory).

Here again however, the cinema is handicapped in comparison to the novel because as we saw, the filmic image can never translate memory as such except by the subterfuge of the ' speaking first person ' which is itself essentially ' novelesque '. It might be argued that after all the novelist too has no extraordinary gift for taking over the ' interior ' visions of others and is not therefore better armed than the film-maker to deal with the problem of memory. This is certainly Jean Mitry's view (p 355). But he adds that the novel has more facilities for deception since it does not show, but tells, and leaves the reader the task of ' making his own images ' (*ibid*), thereby giving him more opportunity to experience the image as belonging to himself than is possible with the implacably external image offered by the film.

The analysis is ingenious and original on more than one point, but only partly convincing: it is by no means established that the act of reading consists – or rather consists in essence – of ' visualising ' the words as they are read so that the text is simply a springboard for an internal film. Envisaging the novel in these terms must surely give grounds for arguing the superiority of the film.[101] It is on the other hand possible to argue that the novel, though many readers may use it to feed a personal fantasy life, in another sense gives us *nothing to imagine;* it simply proposes a text (ie its signifiers *and signifieds*); that text carries within itself some arresting power, some barring power which defines it; and the literary object, like the musical, pictorial or filmic object, is an object of perception and not imagination.[102] The only difference is perhaps that the reader of the novel perceives language while the spectator of the film perceives images. And while the former may have powers of ' interiority ' which the latter has difficulty in equalling, this is possibly not because the latter is incapable of deceit and in this respect differs from the novel, but because the former is specifically and purely a linguistic object. Speech has extensive and obscure powers which include the ability

68 to transport the centre of the world to any site in which it chooses to articulate itself and it can thereby establish a centre of consciousness at any point in space.[103] When the classical novelist assumed the omniscience and ubiquity of God himself and introduced himself in that function into the consciousness of his characters, he was not abusing some power of deception and bluff due to the irresponsibility of speech; he was on the contrary exercising a very real power which derives from the responsibility of speech and is its sole prerogative. But these remarks should not perhaps be opposed to those of Jean Mitry for they belong to a different level of analysis.

To return to the author, Jean Mitry points to another circumstance which he claims explains why the sense of duration is so easily rendered by the novel: the constant dislocation between the time of the diegesis which is always past – for an event has to be in some sense accomplished if it is to be described – and the time of the reading which is always the present. This dislocation gives the reader a double reference system between whose poles the sense of duration finds its place. A similar distancing effect is not possible in the cinema, since the time of the diegesis is the present and therefore coincides with that of the spectator's vision. The spectator accompanies the character at every moment in the film and there is no longer any divergence between the time of the work and that of the consumption of the work.

But is this really so? Isn't it rather the filmic *image* which is always in the present? While the film itself is always in the past just like the novel because like the novel it is a narrative. For it isn't just the novel which pours everything it names into the sphere of the accomplished – this is a characteristic common to all narrative, ie *closed sequences of unrealised events*,[104] whether those events are evoked through speech or images. Albert Laffay has shown this clearly;[105] as has Jean Leirens[106] for the particular case of the filmic narrative. The spectator in the cinema knows he is going to be shown a story already made which has only to be taken out of its container. Not only does he know it, this is what he wants, and the ' love of cinema ' is to a great extent based on that desire.

Many of Jean Mitry's analyses are basically founded on one central idea, which he makes explicit (p 367); namely, that ' the cinema begins where literature ends '. The poem for example starts with words in order to reveal things, while the cinema which has the ability to reproduce things from the outset can – or could in principle – concentrate completely on striving towards the act of language which is meaning. Where a poem and a film both describe the movement of a stretch of water, it could be said that the poem becomes a wave, while the film becomes a poem (p 367).

The formula is attractive and not lacking in force. Its second part – ' the film becomes a poem ' – seems fairly incontestable and

admirably defines the cinema. But on the first part, ie the definition of literature, the author – fervent admirer of the cinema – is perhaps too categorical. The poem does not become a wave, it remains a poem, and if its movement does by chance evoke the movement of a wave effectively, this is nevertheless still a *linguistic wave* – the poem in no sense approaches the real wave. It cannot therefore be said with any certainty that the film begins where the book leaves off. Possibly they both begin at two different points along the same ideal line – that of pure *denotation* – and neither has a head start on the other. One begins with the image (and not with the film), and the other begins with *langue* (and not with language). Both strive towards their common goal – meaning – side by side (not one after another). The film will always be better at showing things, while books will always be better at saying them, and perhaps neither will ever break beyond this evenly matched contest.

It could be argued that with the introduction of sound, film in fact added the benefits of *langue* to those it already had from the image. But this is not true for the *fully diegetic speech* (ie that pronounced by characters as voices in the frame), for this speech is part of the image and remains engulfed in it; it does not transcend the image, and is the speech of the characters, not of the work. On the other hand, the *non-diegetic speech* (ie commentary ' off ' by an anonymous speaker) and the *semi-diegetic speech* (ie commentary ' off ' by one of the characters of the action), are closer to literary speech which constitutes the work rather than forms a part of it. These two ' processes ' would in fact allow one to say that the film extends the image (which defines it) by speech (which defines literature). In fact this has greatly contributed to the ' novelesque ' richness of some of the best modern films (Alain Resnais, Jean-Luc Godard). Nevertheless, film's most constant equivalent of what language is for the novel is constituted by the image-strip. But in spite of the progress made in montage, camera movements and *mise en scène*, these remain considerably less flexible than verbal language in a whole series of areas: ' interiority ', ' dislocations ' in points of view, temporal ellipses, the capacity to abstract, metaphor, the range of more or less ' figurative ' meanings, etc, and finally in the ability to *analyse* proper. All in all, while it is in some sense true that the sound film has the image, and language *in addition* to the image, the novel has *more* of language than the sound film. The one balances the other, if not in kind, at least in the richness of the final content.

Nevertheless, it is a fact of major importance that the cinema has added to all the possibilities provided by the image strip (which has itself become more and more flexibly discursive) some part of the assets that speech has in literature. This is why I would finally come to agree (via different routes) with Jean Mitry's conclusion and observe as he does that the cinema is becoming

 increasingly engaged in the way of the novel.

X Metaphor, Symbol, Language

Jean Mitry takes up the problem of the cinematic ' metaphor ' and ' symbol ' on three occasions (pp 24-26, 381-383, 446-448), linking it to the more general question of language in the cinema (pp 381-390, 436-446). The filmic ' metaphor ' does not merit the name at all, in that it lacks two essential features (p 24): in a metaphor, the resemblance between the two terms – ie the common element or term of comparison at the centre of the metaphor – is not made explicit; we speak of ' a pencil of light ' for instance, not of light ' as thin as ' a pencil. In what are claimed to be filmic metaphors on the other hand, the two terms are co-present on the image-strip so that their resemblance is inevitably ' made explicit ' (taking this to mean that it is emphasised visually and therefore it is not an implied resemblance). For example: the famous ' metaphor ' which opens Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* showing a shot of a flock of sheep preceding the image of a crowd descending into an underground station – here the common element (the idea of gregariousness, impression of sheeplike behaviour) if not exactly specified, is at least clearly shown. The idea of ' thinness ' is carried over from the pencil to the light in such a way that when it arrives at the second term, the first is no longer present; ie when we speak of a pencil of light, the pencil is in some sense absent. Up to a certain point (a fact which needs to be stressed), the metaphor is an operation of substitution in which the thing compared (the ray of light) takes the place of the thing it is compared to (the pencil). In filmic metaphors the two things are aligned side by side (the crowd and the sheep) and the phenomenon of transfer of meaning is much less clear-cut. The crowd remains a crowd, the sheep, sheep. The association of the two simply provokes the effect of a ' symbolic leap ' from one to the other which on the purely semantic level, can acquire a comparative value (ie the spectator associates an idea of sheeplikeness with his vision of the crowd); it may sometimes even acquire a metaphorical value (if for example, the spectator happens to respond to the crowd as if it were a flock of sheep). The author speaks of a ' comparative ' or ' analogical ' relationship in the first case and an ' implied relationship ' in the second (pp 381-383). But both cases involve a symbolic juxtaposition and not a metaphor; whereas the theoreticians who talked of a ' metaphor ' here were using the word in a purely metaphorical sense (p 25).

In the same way comparison proper, ie comparison as a formal procedure (not to be confused with a purely semantic effect of comparison) is impossible in the cinema (p 24).[107] Film does not have the word ' like '. (The word ' like ' and its equivalents in fact allow for a doubling up in the chain of the discourse and

therefore make it possible to avoid the situation where the segments they draw on are put on the same level as the rest. When we read in some narrative that the snow was 'like a mantle of white', the word 'like' acts as a signal warning the reader that the snow and the mantle are on two different levels, and that the diegesis includes the snow, but not the mantle. Thus one term is clearly marked as non-diegetic while the other term escapes the 'like' and remains diegetic. But in the cinema, all the images are on the same level.) Only developments like the triple screen, Jean Mitry goes on, would, by other means, allow the possibility of true filmic comparisons. It could be established for instance that the central screen would be reserved for the diegetic facts and the two lateral screens for comparisons: this would be another way of achieving a doubling of the discourse. But nothing of this sort is possible in 'normal' cinema. (In fact the comparison from *Modern Times* referred to earlier is understandable only by virtue of the logic of the plot which allows the spectator to place the sheep on the level of pure comparison because the remainder of the film shows no sheep whereas it includes numerous images of modern life.[108] But the result is that the filmic comparison must remain in fairly limited usage and must inevitably be fairly crude since it always more or less has to be imposed by its very evidence. Eisenstein's disappointments on this level are well-known, particularly in *October*, with comparisons which were far from simple.)

To return to Mitry – his clarifications are useful since the terminology used in works on the cinema is often very approximate. Writers are quite ready to apply the term 'metaphor' to the set of symbolic juxtaposition effects as soon as they contain a comparative or metaphorical suggestion. These 'metaphors' are often classified in two categories which moreover go under a variety of names: a distinction is made for cases where the thing compared to and the thing compared both belong to the action (ie a resemblance between two elements of the drama); and another for cases where only the thing compared belongs to the action, the thing compared to being present only for the comparison (example: the sheep in *Modern Times*). The term 'diegetic metaphor' is sometimes used for the first case and 'non-diegetic (or extra-diegetic) metaphor' for the second.

Jean Mitry's analysis makes the point that neither of these two processes is a metaphor (since in both cases the thing compared to and the thing compared are co-present in the filmic chain) and neither are they a comparison (since in both cases the implied resemblance does not correspond to any formal mark). Both are *syntagmatic juxtapositions entailing a semantic 'effect' which suggests resemblances.* The most appropriate expressions to designate these processes would , it seems to me, be 'juxtaposition with a comparative value' and 'juxtaposition with a metaphorical value' respectively, according to whether on the semantic level,

the resemblance suggested develops more towards the comparison or to the metaphor. (' The crowd is like a flock of sheep ', or ' The crowd is a flock of sheep '). These could be appropriately abbreviated to ' comparative juxtaposition ' or ' metaphorical juxtaposition ' (or again: ' comparative parallel ' or ' metaphorical parallel '). In addition, a distinction would still be made between diegetic and non-diegetic juxtapositions according to whether the thing compared to is diegetic or non-diegetic (since the thing compared is by definition always diegetic). In other words a double entry-system which is open to four terms: ' comparative diegetic juxtaposition ', ' metaphorical diegetic juxtaposition ', ' comparative non-diegetic juxtaposition 'and ' metaphorical non-diegetic juxtaposition '. This basic scheme could be extended as required to take in any supplementary pertinent factors (eg the fact that the two terms figure either in the same image or in two different images could possibly provide the material for a third term in the system which would then have eight terms). A general title to ' head ' all these comparisons which suggest resemblances (and to distinguish them from other parallels like those which stress contrasts or indicate diegetic chronologies, etc) could well be quite simply ' juxtapositions of resemblance '.[109]

For Jean Mitry, what is true of the ' cinematic metaphors ' is equally true of the set of filmic connotations, ie the second layer of signification which superimposes itself on the literal meaning of the plot in the film. All filmic connotations result from appropriate associations between different elements of the film (pp 21-22, 399), whether they are elements contained in different images (montage), or whether they figure in the same ' shot ' but succeed one another (camera movement), or whether finally they are in the same shot simultaneously (sometimes called ' editing in the camera '). For Jean Mitry (who on this point is very Eisensteinian) the cinema, while perhaps not the art of montage, is at least a totally syntagmatic art (pp 399, 447). What gives the film its symbolic sense as well as its literal sense is a set of juxtapositions (Mitry thus returns to his major idea of ' the logic of implication ' developed in the first volume). The elements brought together may both belong to the image-strip, but filmic implication can also set up a relationship between an element of the image (or the complete image) and the dialogue (p97) or the music (p 121), or between a musical element and the dialogue, between noise and the image, or between a particular element of the film and an entire sequence or even the film in general (p 26) etc. All kinds of combinations are possible. All have in common the characteristic of being features of contiguity in Jakobson's sense (p 447)[110] since the two terms are always co-present in the film.

Jean Mitry's views coincide with my own impression of the striking contrast that exists between the rich syntagmatic connections which film allows, and the poverty of its paradigmatic

connections.[111] He goes even further since he considers the paradigmatic to be completely lacking. (We will return to this point later.)

Filmic implications at the level of connotation always have a more or less symbolic character (pp 24-26, 443-444): by this I mean that the diegetic element, while retaining its literal meaning, is enriched by a supplementary value which it could not have claimed on its own but is conferred upon it through its interplay with the context. The author accepts the term ' symbol ' to designate the phenomenon of ' extension of meaning ', which allows the level of pure denotation to be superceded but *never ignored or contradicted* (pp 26, 380-381). In Fritz Lang's *M*, after the attack on the little girl, we are shown the balloon she has abandoned caught in the telegraph wires, and the balloon comes to symbolise the victim's brutal death. However, this supplementary sense is not arbitrary, for it is precisely the balloon the child was playing with – and not some other object lacking any ' natural ' connection with the victim's suffering – which is chosen to symbolise that suffering. Therefore it is not just the denoted signification in film which is ' motivated ' (the motivation on this level being supplied by iconic or auditive analogy), but also the connoted signification (p 445). The only distinction is that motivation at the level of the denoted is *internal* motivation (Jean Mitry uses the term *intrinsic*, after Eric Buyssens), since it is produced by the natural resemblance between the signifier and the signified without leaving the framework of a single visual (or auditive) motif. On the level of connotation, motivation is in some way *external* (for Mitry *extrinsic*, which he stresses is not used in Buyssens' sense) since, while it remains an effect of natural logic, it nevertheless presumes an association of one or more distinct filmic elements and thereby requires leaving the framework of the symbolic unit itself to locate the motivation of the symbol. In the example of *M* for instance, the symbolic value of the image of the balloon would be incomprehensible to anyone who had not followed the beginning of the film.

It would seem that the term ' symbol ' taken here in a very wide sense but clearly explained by the author, lends itself fairly effectively to designating the majority of filmic connotations. For there is general agreement on including in the notion of ' symbol ' an idea which is exactly realised precisely in cinematic connotation: the term symbolic is used when the signified motivates the signifier and at the same time transcends it; the cross is the symbol of Christianity because Christ died on the cross (ie motivation), but there is more in Christianity than there is in a cross (ie transcendance). But *motivated transcendance* is in fact what chiefly characterises the various ' second meanings ' of the film, which is in this sense symbolic through and through. In addition, the term ' *sign* ' (as opposed to symbol, specifically) is usually reserved for arbitrary (unmotivated) significations. But while the symbol, in

74 the cinema as elsewhere, may sometimes come to function as a sign (cf Jean Mitry p 443), since the balloon caught in the wires warns us that the attack on the victim has happened (just as the sight of a cross tells us we are approaching a church), it still differentiates itself from an arbitrary sign. This is because the signifier, as it is partially motivated, always carries something of the experienced reality and human resonance of the signified event: whereas the words ' rape ' and ' small victim ' in no way resemble a rape or a small victim, the balloon in *M* does have something of the soft, helpless, imprisoned and pathetic about it which is not without connection with the fate of its young owner. The cinema is expressive, even twice over – as an art of reality (denotation) and quite simply as art (connotation).[112]

Obviously the term ' symbol ' has other accepted meanings. Many of the ' mathematical symbols ' are arbitrary as are the majority of the graphic codes known under the global name of ' symbolic notations '. A global unity for the body of semiological researches is far from being a fact. Nevertheless, Jean Mitry's choice of the word ' symbol ' seems to me fairly apt in that it corresponds to the most accepted usage of the word *in research on the ' languages ' of art* (to which the cinema belongs) without really clashing with the predominantly different usage in general semiological research.

Jean Mitry also makes clear that the *symbolism* of the film is not a *symbolic-system* (pp 25, 444). The cinematic symbol emerges in each film, it is not the actualisation of some pre-existing and fixed symbolic unity. A symbolic system is a codified set of symbols, while the filmic symbol is both completely free and completely created (for the author, with whom we are not in total agreement on this point, never separates creativity from absolute freedom). According to Mitry the symbol is *implicated* in the film as it is a result of the combination of its compositional elements; it is not *applied* from the outside (p 134). Of course many films contain imported symbols (social, psychoanalytical, etc) which are integrated with varying degrees of success into the diegetic continuity, but they are clearly *filmed symbols* and not *filmic symbols* (p 25), and this is not where the essence of cinematic symbolism lies. One may remember on this point that Rudolf Arnheim concluded at the end of an analysis fairly similar to Jean Mitry's that the filmic symbol did not warrant the name.[113] But Arnheim took the term symbol in the very restricted sense of a codified symbol so that the divergences between the two authors only bear on terminological conventions.

Taking a somewhat different perspective on some of the ideas on ' cinematic language ' which he advanced in the first volume (pp 47-134), Jean Mitry sets out to refute an objection often raised against the upholders of his thesis, and which has been particularly developed by Dinah Dreyfus.[114] Her argument is that articulated language warrants being called language because it sets in play

pure signs, objects which are simply signs, and beings which cease to be beings as soon as they become signs; the sounds of phonetic production (or the characters of graphic production) are completely transparent to sense, the listener (or the reader) traverses them without regard for their auditive (or visual) substantiality, going directly to the sense they produce. The film image on the other hand, differing in this respect from the linguistic sign, can never be ignored as an image. The sense proper to it (ie what it represents) never effaces itself in favour of another sense, as a value of exchange or communication. Dinah Dreyfus supports this position on an initial observation which is not without basis: the phonetic sound is purely 'impressive', it does not of itself (ie outside of the idiom) have any precise meaning; the image on the contrary is 'expressive' – it has of itself and prior to any act of language a circumstantial signification which is never lost in the midst of all the accrued meanings allowed by the filmic discourse. This is why the filmic image, even when armed with a second meaning, is always a symbol and never a sign. In a way, Dinah Dreyfus and Jean Mitry are clearly saying the same thing. The spiritedness of their disagreement stems from the fact that Dinah Dreyfus refuses, for the reasons just outlined, to consider the cinema as a language, while Jean Mitry uses those same reasons to conclude that the cinema is a language, infinitely different from verbal language (p 446), but a language nevertheless, since it has in common with verbal language the unique and fundamental property of communicating a sense (*ibid*). Jean Mitry observes with some justification (p 443) that it is all too easy to argue that all language must resemble verbal language and to conclude from that that filmic language, because it differs from verbal language, is therefore not a language. The film has symbols and not signs, it is true, but it is precisely a characteristic of the semiology of film to allow these symbols to act as signs (p 443).

Obviously, this could be put down to a simple quarrel about words: Dinah Dreyfus refuses to apply the word 'language' to signification-systems other than language proper, while Jean Mitry accepts it. And one could attempt to reconcile the opponents by persuading them to allow each other the certainty of the existence of a semiotics of film (which may or may not be baptised 'language'). In aesthetic analysis, this use of the word 'language' does not provoke any misunderstandings; however, for researches of a more 'paralinguistic' kind the term language could justifiably be reserved for verbal language[115] since words like 'semy' 'semiotic', 'signification system' are also available and could correspond to the distinctions and classifications of technical semiology (which is not obliged to concern itself with the discourse of aestheticians at every turn). It is nevertheless true that most disputes over words contain something more than just themselves: what seems to me important is not so much that Jean Mitry is

battling to retain the name ' language ' for the cinema, but that in his insistence can be read a firm resolve to *take into consideration the problem of the semiology of film* and to study in detail the mechanism of signification in the cinema. In this sense there is something very positive in this author's attitude.

Jean Mitry observes that connotation in the cinema is simply the form of the denotation (p 381): filmic symbols have to appear ' natural ', they have to give the spectator the impression that they are inscribed into the diegesis itself and not artificially superimposed by a film-maker's intention directly perceptible as such. This idea of connotation through the form of the denotation is equally important from the standpoint of a more technical semiology. After Louis Hjelmslev,[116] a language of connotation is a language where the signifier is constituted by the totality of the material of denotation, ie both signifier and signified. Thus, schematising a little, it can be said that when a filmic event from the diegetic world (ie the signified of denotation) is presented to the spectator, and moreover presented in particular modes of representation (ie as signifier of denotation), the spectator is put in possession of the two elements which together constitute the signifier of connotation; and the latter in turn has as its signified the ' symbolic ' meaning of the corresponding filmic passage (or its specifically *expressive* value).[117] To take an example: a film-maker wishes to represent two events which are simultaneous in the diegesis (the signified of denotation = among other things, simultaneity) and as a corresponding denotative signifier has a choice between: (a) parallel montage (event A – event B – event A – event B – etc); (b) a more ordinary form of montage where the two events are presented one after another without any kind of alternation (the second then being antedated by some subterfuge: eg an inter-title of the ' meanwhile . . .' type, an element of the dialogue, an inference through some detail of the image, etc). The impression finally received by the spectator would not be the same in the two hypothetical cases outlined. The concrete sense of a close simultaneity between the two events would be stronger in the case of parallel montage. Nevertheless, the signified of denotation (or of *representation*) – here the fact of a simultaneity in the literal chronology of the diegesis – would be correctly undestood in both cases. But the form of the denotation would not be the same and the connotation would therefore also be modified. On the whole the cinema is generally able to connote without needing *special* connotators because it has constantly at its disposal the most essential of all connotators – ie the choice between several ways of constructing the denotation. Inversely, it is because *the filmic denotation is itself constructed* (montage, framing, choice and arrangement of the motifs), because it can never be reduced to any automatic functioning of iconic analogy, and because the film is not photography, that the cinema is able to connote without the constant help of

separate signifiers of connotation.*

On the other hand, a point on which I cannot agree completely with Jean Mitry's ideas (pp 445-446) is also one on which he expresses reservations on certain of my positions (p 450). He holds that cinematic creativity is inseparably linked to absolute freedom, that nothing in the cinema is codified – except perhaps the trite and clichéd and more generally, the mediocre – finally (the three things go together) that the syntagmatic combinations invented by the film are not supported by any paradigmatic, so that no ' syntax ' can be said to exist. To me it seems on the contrary that:

(1). while there may not be a syntax, there is at least a ' *grande syntagmatique* of the narrative film '; this consists of a number of *types of combinations* which are partially codified and never arbitrary (for the arbitrary/codified distinction does not always correspond to the distinction between codified and ' free ');

(2) beyond the variations possible in concrete realisations from one film to another, certain image constructions retain a certain structural stability and a specifically semiological aspect (for example: frequentative syntagm[118] has as its signifier a cascade of images strung together by dissolves, superimpositions, fades or quick pans – and its signified is the monotonous or repetitive nature of the actions evoked;

(3) the film-maker at each point in the film only has a choice between a limited number of *basic* combinations – six in all it would seem: the alternating syntagm, the episodic syntagm, the descriptive syntagm, the ' single shot ', the ' sequence ' proper and the ' scene ' proper. Through the possibilities of their combination along the filmic chain these can finally result in a much higher number of concrete realisations at the level of a ' passage ' of a certain length;

(4) this major syntagmatic does not exclude any paradigmatic order but in fact *constitutes* one since what the film-maker chooses from is precisely a substitutive series of types of combination (just as in some *langues*, the existence of a limited number of clauses – ' final ', ' concessive ', ' completive ', etc – creates paradigms of syntagms);

(5) these partially codified combinations are neither trite nor clichéd, for banality can only be a function of the *message*, and these syntagmatic types are the elements of a fragmentary *code* (thus a writer's use of the consecutive clause – a unit of the code – is neither banal nor original, for art and idiom are two different things);

(6) finally, that the creativity of the film-maker cannot correspond to any *total* and *initial* absolute freedom but rather to a margin for stratagems and play in relation to the semi-codified structures.

* For a re-examination of the problems of connotation, see ' La connotation de nouveau ' in *Essais*, Vol II, pp 163-172.

78 These structures are themselves shifting and have their own diachrony over which the innovations of the inventive film-maker can in fact exert a certain influence (which is moreover one of the major differences between ' cinematic language ' and the *langues*). These structures consequently do not ever confront the film-maker with an uncompromising choice between on the one hand the need to disregard absolutely the existing codifications if he is to create what he wants, and a slavish observance on the other. They on the contrary leave him extensive opportunities for an observance which is in no sense slavish, and innovations which are never total, thereby constituting what is probably the most natural and permanent route to cinematic ' originality '.

Conclusion

I concluded my discussion in *Critique* of the first volume of *L'Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma* by saying that this book – the first general treatise on the art of the film since the considerably less extensive analyses of Bela Balasz and Rudolf Arnheim – through its range and seriousness marked a decisive step in reflection on the cinema. I expressed the hope that analyses of the same kind would be produced on specific problems of film theory, based on the important principles established by Jean Mitry in his first volume. (For what is called the ' theory ' of cinema is not opposed to its criticism or its history, as a study of generalities to a study of particularities. Just as the critic and the historian have their generalities, so the theoretician encounters a whole set of particular problems: the subjective image is one thing, the voice-off is another, and the metaphor yet another, etc).

But I could not have foreseen – as I did not know what the second volume would contain – that the first of these more particular analyses I hoped to see would be provided by Jean Mitry himself.

All those concerned with the theory of film – and equally those interested in general aesthetics, the ' languages ' of art, etc – should read the two volumes of *L'Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma* and not be discouraged by the few imperfections referred to at the beginning of this article. For if they go on waiting for a book which would be as rich as Jean Mitry's and at the same time rather better ' licked into shape ', they risk waiting a long time yet. . . .

Notes

1. ' Une étape dans la reflexion sur le cinema ', *Critique* no 214, March 1965, p 227-248.
2. *Le Réel Physique et les Données du Monde Sensible.*
3. For instance chapter 78 (*Réalisme et Réalité*) is something of a rag-bag: besides the analyses of subjects which correspond to the title, it includes a long passage (pp 412-420) which is an unnecessary repetition of ideas already developed elsewhere on the problem of

filming 'in continuity'; a few scattered remarks about the actor's work and interpretation (pp 420, 421); a rather too polemical passage strangely out of place in such a work, on the moral decadence of a particular modern bourgeoisie, and on the characters of Antonioni's films (pp 422-427), a very correct and vigorous refutation of Jean Epstein's ideas on the cinema as a school of spatio-temporal relativism and propaedeutic of modern science (p 432); a very interesting distinction between the three major forms of filmic un-realism (pp 427-434); and finally a brief comparison between the cinema and the theatre (pp 434, 435)!

4. For the filmic metaphor and symbol, see for example, pp 24-26, 381-383 and 446-448.
5. Particularly in his book *Orson Welles* (Paris, Chavanne, 1950, p 57 *et seq*) and in many of the passages of *Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma?* (Paris, Le Cerf), especially in Volume I (*Ontologie et Langage*, 1958): cf *Montage Interdit* pp 117-119, *William Wyler ou le janséniste de la Mise-en-scène*, pp 149-173 and especially *L'évolution du Langage Cinématographique*, pp 131-148.
6. A classic example: *Le Règle du Jeu* (Jean Renoir, France, 1938) especially in the scene of the intersecting pursuits.
7. I have examined some aspects of this renaissance in an article entitled '*Le Cinéma Moderne et la Narrativité*' (1966). (Reprinted in *Essais sur le Signification au Cinéma*, Vol 1, pp 185-221).
8. In the main, the movement was launched by *La Roue* (Abel Gance, France 1922); it was stopped about the time that most of the films produced were sound films, ie around 1929).
9. I have examined this point (ie the cinema conceived as *langue*) in *Le cinéma Langue ou Langage?* (1964) (reprinted in *Essais*, Vol I, pp 39-59).
10. On this point, however, André Bazin himself admitted in passing that the 'parallelepiped of uniformly clear reality' – the words are his – brought about by the long take, has no exact equivalent in real perception (note 1 on pp 159, 160 of *Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma*, Vol I).
11. Page 120 in particular.
12. On this point see also Albert Laffay's important contribution: Chapter II ('Le Récit, le Monde et le Cinéma, pp 51-90) of *Logique du Cinéma* (Paris, Masson, 1964).
13. The author notes that the word 'montage' has been retained because the expression *montage effect* – which in reality designates the play of implication in a whole variety of forms – came into use in the period of the early cinema; in that period, the linking of two motifs was usually achieved by montage in the proper sense (p 21).
14. The term 'induction' occurs in Rudolf Arnheim's *Film als Kunst* (Berlin, Rowohlt Verlag, 1932) on page 121.
15. *Theory of the Film* (London, Denis Dobson, 1952) p 126.
16. In addition, semantic induction also assumes a *previous knowledge* which relates both to reality (in the last century Indians often attacked stage coaches) and to the laws of cinematic *genre:* the Indians' attack on the stagecoach represents a narrative segment which is far more likely to occur in a western than in life, or than in the mean of films. This in some sense informational criterion, which results from an intuitive awareness of the frequency of occurrences in a similar earlier 'corpus' (ie the notion of cinematic *genre*), should not be ignored. But its analysis would lead us too far from the present concerns.
17. This is in fact the word used to designate one of the most common camera movements in modern cinema. (French critics tend to speak

of the 'trajectory of the camera' when describing crane shots, dolly shots, tracking shots, etc . . . The term refers to the distance travelled and route taken by the camera, rather than to the means by which the movement was accomplished. **Editorial Note).**

18. *Theory of the Film* (*op cit*) pp 139-141: in comparison with the perceived reality of space, there was always something deceptive about montage.
19. *Le Langage Cinématographique* (Paris, Le Cerf, 1955), pp 152, 153: a camera movement is never indispensable but it is sometimes more expressive than montage would be.
20. I am in full agreement with this analysis by Jean Mitry. From the moment it is perceived, movement is always perceived as real. It has no materiality (unlike a body, a movement cannot be touched); thus to reproduce its visual perception means therefore to reproduce its reality in its entirety. The *effigy* on the other hand (eg a photograph) always remains distinct from its model because of its deficit in materiality vis a vis the model (the phenomenal and intuitive criterion of tactility). It is therefore quite true that movements – including those of the camera – make an important contribution to the impression of reality and actuality given by films. (cf Christian Metz, 'A propos de l'impression de réalité au cinéma', 1965, reprinted in *Essais*, pp 13-24).
21. In the twenties when subjective images aroused a great deal of enthusiasm and interest among theoreticians – as Jean Mitry recalls in detail (pp 61-64) – the term 'subjective' impartially designated both the views attributed to a character and the directly expressive optical distortions (ie those which translated the film maker's view). But, as is well known, subjective images of the second kind have virtually disappeared at least in the form of violent distortions (they are now only found in special, more or less un-realist *genres* where the total context gives them quite a different value). In the majority of films at the moment, the 'subjective' vision of the film maker is compatible with a respect for 'realistic' appearances; it could be said that instead of being *inserted* at certain points in the films, which would thereby be opposed to the rest, it is a *constituant* of what for the spectator is precisely the objectivity of the diegesis. The whole film becomes a 'world-seen-by' without ever becoming eccentric.
22. At the same time one could say that the cinema is too unreal, and these two conflicting causes finally have the same effect (ie the extreme difficulty in materialising mental images in a film). To explain: the quasi-real the film presents us with, is always seen as imaginary by the spectator since he is aware that he is in the cinema, and that the 'impression of reality' never becomes a genuine illusion. On this basis, isn't it possible to regard the difficulties the film has in dealing with imaginings of its diegetic characters as equally due to the fact that there always has been a dislocation already and that no second one can be produced without some peculiar psychological distortion. The spectator would need to view as absent (since this is the cinema) objects which the character himself views as absent (because he is involved in a daydream or envisaging some fear, etc . . .) But the spectator is also accustomed to view as absent (because the film is a narrative) the objects which the character is assumed to view as present and of which he is moreover a part, since in the eyes of the spectator the character is one of the facts of the diegetic world. Perhaps the image is only capable of having a single status, that of imaginary-for-the-spectator which is also real-for-the-character. It is both because the image is too real and because it is too imaginary that the film has no

resources for the imaginary as such.

23. Bela Balasz distinguished two sorts of subjective images: those which show 'the world of the mind' and those which show 'the mind in the world' (*Theory of the Film, op cit* p 179). The first formula designates a purely mental and 'internal' image, the second, an 'objective' image capable of being perceived, but which presents the view of the world as it appears to a character (or to the film maker himself). In an earlier text, Bela Balasz had already proposed a distinction to some extent analogous to the one outlined here: certain filmic images, according to him, present 'things as they appear to the spirit', others present 'the spirit which manifests itself in a gesture' or on a face. Here the first formula again designates the mental image, while the second refers to images which for the spectator are entirely objective (ie all those where the feelings of the hero are to be read in his attitude). This distinction features in *Der Geist des Films* (Halle, Saale, W. Knapp, 1930; reprinted in *Der Film*, Vienna, Globus Verlag, 1949).

    On the question of mental images ('the world of the mind', 'things as they appear to the spirit') Bela Balasz, while bringing a discerning judgment to bear on what the cinematic *avant garde* had produced in this area, nevertheless finally comes out in favour of the principle of the 'internal' film, that is, the film which materialises the flow of the mind (*Theory of the Film*, p 179 also). In *Der Geist des Films*. mentioned above, the Hungarian theoretician even calls this kind of film the 'absolute film'.

24. However, in 1940, Orson Welles put together a project for a film of the same *genre, Heart of Darkness,* but it was never produced The project for *The Lady in the Lake,* which was completed in 1946, dates from 1938.
25. *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*) pp 94-97.
26. *Le Cinéma et le Temps* (Paris, Le Cerf, 1954) pp 38, 39.
27. 'Le je, le moi, le il au cinéma', *Image et son,* 1950.
28. *Le Langage Cinématographique* (*op cit*) pp 35, 36.
29. 'Cinéma et psychologie', in *Temps modernes,* July 1949, no 45, pp 149-164 (on *The Lady in the Lake,* pp 153-155).
30. 'Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie, lecture at IDHEC on March 13, 1945 (reprinted in *Sens et Non-sens,* Nagel, 1948).
31. 'Les "films à la première personne sonore" et l'illusion de réalité au cinéma', *Revue du Cinéma,* 2nd series, no 4, January 1947, pp 32-41.
32. See Jean Leirens, *Le Cinéma et le Temps* (*op cit*) p 57.
33. Jean Mitry had already broached the question of the commented flash-back in his first volume, pp 140, 141.
34. *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*) p 71.
35. Albert Laffay, *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*). Apart from the passages already quoted on the various problems of the subjective image, see pp 73-85 and 105-108.
36. August 5, 1928, *Zhin Iskusstvo* (Moscow) no 32 (The English title of this essay is: 'A Statement on the Sound Film', in Film Form. **Editorial Note).**
37. The most important of which are collected in *Reflexion Faite* (Paris, Gallimard, 7th ed 1951) particularly pp 137-161. (In this work René Clair quotes and discusses, after an interval of some twenty years, his own earlier articles).
38. In 1952, in *Theory of the Film* (*op cit*) pp 194-203, 207, 209, 210, 218 and 219 (where the word 'a-synchronic' appears). It should be noted however that in other passages Bela Balasz adopts a more discerning attitude; in particular he shows the rather negative and desperate aspects of the attitude of *resistance to the sound film*

pp 221, 222 *et seq*).

39. Especially book V: 'Asynchronism as a principle of Sound Film'.
40. Marcel Pagnol had noted the phenomenon with a good deal of humour in his 'Deuxieme manifeste', *Cinématurgie de Paris* (*Cahiers du Film*, December 15, 1933).
41. This process is advocated by René Clair (*Reflexion Faite*, (*op cit*) p 153), and by Pudovkin (*On Film Technique*, Book V). It became an established usage.
42. In this film, the oddity of this process is attenuated by its consciously provocative and humorous character. This was not the case with all such effects.
43. One must keep in mind here that Metz is slightly distorting the facts: the Soviet directors most certainly did not regard the principle of asynchronism as an absolute imperative. Pudovkin quite clearly states that 'the first function of sound is to augment the potential expressiveness of the film's content' (*On Film Technique*, Grove Press 1970, p 184). In the examples he gives, Pudovkin underlines the fact that the use of asynchronism can also heighten the emotional effect of otherwise synchronic sound. Neither does Eisenstein reject 'factual synchronisation': '(in the case of factual synchronisation) art begins only at that moment of synchronisation when the natural connection between the object and its sound is not merely *recorded*, but is *dictated* solely by the demands of the expressive work in progress' (in *Film Sense*, Harvest Books, pp 82, 83). See also Eisenstein on polyphonic and vertical montage for similar arguments. It is clear that asynchronism was never intended to replace synchronic sound-image correspondancies, as Metz seems to suggest. In fact, Mitry explicitly states – and Metz acknowledges this – that he criticises only the excessive use (wherever the borderline may be) of the principle of asynchronism. In this context it may also be useful to point out that Metz revised his opinion of Eisenstein's theoretical writing after *Cahiers du Cinéma* had published some new and previously untranslated texts by the Soviet theoretician. **Editorial Note.**
44. Pages 65-70 of *Le Cinéma: Langue ou Langage?* (*op cit*).
45. *Film als Kunst* (*op cit*) pp 282-291 ('Parallelismus und Kontrapuntik') and pp 291-302 ('Asynchronismus').
46. *Ibid*, p 283.
47. There are exceptions: in many documentary or instructional films, or compilation films, it is the verbal element which ensures a continuity *illustrated* by the image. Speech becomes the 'cement of the montage', to use Edgar Morin's expression. Analogous constructions, which are, however, less clear in form, can be found in some passages of fiction films.
48. Not to be confused with what is called 'cinematic theatre': Laurence Olivier (*Hamlet, Henry V*), Orson Welles (*Macbeth, Othello*), Jean Cocteau (*Les Parents Terribles*) and some aspects of the films of Marcel Pagnol.
49. The same view is expressed in Albert Laffay's *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*) pp 38-42 ('Bruits et Langage'). Filmic speech and the speech of everyday life are on the same side, both are opposed to the Word of the theatre.
50. It is well known that Mikel Dufrenne carried out a very thorough analysis of the relationships of signification and expression in the language of everyday life He does not mention the cinema but otherwise his analysis is completely in agreement with those of Jean Mitry and Albert Laffay: *Phénoménologie de l'Expérience Esthétique*, Paris, PUF, 1953, Vol I, *L'Object Esthétique*, p 175 *et seq*.
51. Since Maurice Merleau-Ponty's lecture (already quoted), after which

the topic was taken up frequently by others (Jean Masares, Marcel Martin, etc).

52. See Albert Laffay: 'Speech (in the cinema) should be conceived of as the murmur of the characters, and not as a text which they have to speak'.
53. With the already noted exception of certain documentary and instructional films, etc . . . or in the kind of short lyrical films which illustrate a poetic text spoken in voice-off.
54. This idea runs through many of the passages of Jean Mitry's book.
55. *Esquisse d'une Psychologie du Cinéma.* First published in *Verve,* 1940, pp 11-8. Published separately by Gallimard in 1946. Reprinted as a chapter entitled 'Cinema' in *Le Musée Imaginaire* (in *Psychologie de l'art*). Reproduced in Marcel L'Herbier's collection *L'Intelligence du Cinématographe* (Corréa, 1945, pp 372-381).
56. This idea has been expressed in various ways by various authors: Robert Bresson (*Ecran Français,* November 1946), Barthélémy Amengual (*Présence et Evocation au Cinéma,* Alger, ed Travail et Culture, 1951), Henri Agel (*Le Cinéma,* Paris, Casterman, 1954, pp 121, 122), Albert Laffay (*Logique du Cinéma, op cit,* especially pp 46-49.
57. *Theory of the Film* (*op cit*) pp 252, 253.
58. *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*) pp 79-81.
59. I have in mind here the classical novel. The *nouveau roman* poses different problems. Besides, on the sociological level, one could in fact claim that the cinema, or at least the great mass of its present production, has taken over the function of the classical novel which is more or less on the decline.
60. Less basic and more obvious at the same time, for they are principally related to the techniques of direction and *mise en scène.*
61. In *Esprit,* April 1936 and in *Cahiers de L'IDHEC,* no 1, 1944 (publication of a lecture entitled *La musique dans le Film*). The latter was reprinted in *Ecran Français,* July 3, 1946.
62. See again Eisenstein's comments on the five modes of synchronisation between sound and image, a theory which Metz attacked above, without explicitly naming it; cf note 43. **Editorial Note.**
63. Pierre Schaeffer devoted several articles to problems of this kind. The most important is '*L'élément non-visuel au Cinéma*', *Revue du cinéma,* 2nd series, no 1, October 1946, pp 45-48; no 2, November 1946, pp 62-65; no 3, December 1946, pp 51-54.
64. cf Christian Metz, *A propos de l'impression de réalité au cinéma* (*op cit*).
65. The term 'index' in this context is a slight extension of the type of sign defined by C. S. Peirce. **Editorial Note.**
66. This observation was made by Rudolf Arnheim (if not specifically about movement, at least in relation to sound): *Film als Kunst* (*op cit*), p 265. More generally, many authors have noted that sound gives volume to the image and endows it with a kind of third dimension. See for example Werner Schmalenbach, *Dialogue et bruitage dans le film, Cinéma d'aujourd'hui,* ed des Trois Collines, Switzerland, 1946, pp 99-113, and Claude-Emile Rosen, 'Le Bruit' in *Revue d'Esthétique,* 1955, vol 8, no 2, pp 157-170.
67. *Theory of the Film* (*op cit*) p 216.
68. At the end of the eighteenth century in France, children in the country were taught to read with an early form of coloured cartoon. This form persisted up to the end of the nineteenth century. The generic term for these coloured image-sheets was 'images d'Epinal', due to the phenomenal popularity of the images produced in the Pellerin printing works in Epinal, a small town in the Vosges.

69. In the case of Rudolf Arnheim this is a general tendency; it is even more apparent in his disciple J R Debrix (*Les Fondements de l'Art Cinématographique*, Paris, Le Cerf, 1960). Henri Agel on the other hand takes this position on the specific problem of colour (*Le Cinéma, op cit*, p 159).
70. A contribution to the symposium on the effects of film in function of the new techniques (Sorbonne, February 1955). Published in *Revue Internationale de Filmologie*, 1955, no 20-24, pp 92-95. Passage quoted p 93.
71. Particularly, 'Colour and Meaning', part 3 of *The Film Sense* (1942); pp 113-153 in the complete edition *Film Form – The Film Sense* (ed Jay Leyda, New York, Harcourt Brace, 1957); and 'Not coloured, but of colour', text written in 1940 and published in *Notes of a film Director*, pp 114-119.
72. An idea common to Eisenstein and Jean Mitry who both apply it to the cinema. In its general form this conception is often asserted by modern structuralism (Claude Lévi-Strauss and Roland Barthes in particular).
73. Particularly by Jean Germain: *La Musique et le Film*, pp 137-155, *L'Univers Filmique* (Flammarion, 1963, collection edited by Etienne Souriau); and by Eisenstein himself, *Form and Content: Practice* (Part 4 of *The Film Sense, op cit*, pp 157-216).
74. pp 287-354.
75. In *Form and Content: Practice* (*op cit*).
76. Hundreds of pins are thrust side by side into a flat surface. By varying the depth to which they are inserted (and with the aid of lighting) it is possible to 'draw' infinitely supple forms. This is of course an animation film technique working frame by frame. The manipulations occur between takes.
77. The film *Pacific 231* (music by Arthur Honegger) was made with similar intentions, but on a different theme.
78. 'Georges Méliès et la première élaboration du langage cinématographique' *Revue Internationale de Filmologie*, no 1 July-August 1947, pp 23-30, passage quoted p 24.
79. The theory of 'differentiation factors' between the real perceptual image ('*Weltbild*') and the filmic image ('*Filmbild*'). The cinema qualifies as art because it gives a specific representation of things. See in particular the whole of Chapter III (pp 49-156) of *Film als Kunst* (*op cit*): 'Wie gefilmt wird (Die Kunstmittel der Kamera und des Bildstreifens)'.
80. The notion of the 'creative camera' (*Theory of the Film, op cit* chap 6 pp 46-51). The camera does not simply reproduce. The spectacle which finally figures in the film, with all its meticulously arranged details, is a true product of the cinematic intervention.
81. The cinema was first a 'means of reproduction' (reproducing spectacles from life or theatre). Gradually it became a 'means of expression'. The cinema had to be invented twice (first technically, and then artistically). *Esquisse d'une Psychologie du Cinéma* (*op cit*) pp 374-375 in Marcel L'Herbier's Collection (*op cit*).
82. The distinction between the simple 'cinematograph' of the early period and the authentic 'cinema' which followed (*Le cinéma ou l'homme imaginaire* Paris, ed. de Minuit, 1956, Chap III, pp 55-90).
83. Example: in a biographical film of a singer making a series of triumphal appearances around the world we are shown images of ecstatic audiences, banner headlines extolling the artist, trains rushing at high speed from one town to the next, etc. The images are linked together by a whole series of dissolves.

84. *'Théâtre et Cinéma'*, in *Esprit*, June 1951 and July-August 1951. Reprinted in *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma? (op cit)*, Volume II *(Le cinéma et les autres arts*, 1959, pp 69-118).
85. pp 75 and 101 (cf also p 107).
86. pp 78-80. It was not just the text but also the play between actor and audience which for Bazin constituted the difference between theatre and cinema. We will return to this point later.
87. pp 97-101.
88. 'Les grands thèmes de l'écran', *Revue du Cinéma* (2nd series), no 12, April 1948, pp 3-19. (The cinema, which is so adept at describing and wandering through space, has little facility for enclosing or circumscribing it, pp 4-8). This article also appears in *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*), pp 115-135.
89. *'Personnages'* (Chap VI p 137-155, in *Logique du Cinéma, op cit*). And also *Bruits et Langage* (Chap II pp 31-49. On the 'naturalness' of cinematic speech pp 38-42).
90. Henri Gouhier's well known observation that: 'the stage can accommodate all illusions except the illusion of presence'.
91. The same idea can be found in Albert Laffay's *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*) *passim* and especially p 13.
92. Etienne Souriau, Préface (pp 5-10) to *L'univers Filmique* (*op cit*) and 'La structure de l'univers filmique et le vocabulaire de la filmologie', in *Revue Internationale de Filmologie*, no 7-8, pp 231-240.
93. 'Personnages' (*op cit*), particularly p 143.
94. *Théâtre et Film* (Preface of *Le film de la Duchesse de Langeais*, Paris, Grasset, 1942).
95. In his well-known article in *Esprit* (1937) on 'identification' and 'opposition' in the theatre and in the cinema.
96. pp 95, 96 of *Théâtre et Cinéma* (*op cit*).
97. Arguments along these lines were advanced by the majority of the *metteurs en scène* who spoke during the series of screenings, debates and lectures organised in January-March 1966 by Professor Scherer and Alain Virmiaux on behalf of the Institut d'Etudes Théâtrales de la Sorbonne on the theme: Theatre and Cinema – divergent arts or twin arts?

    And apart from those who participated in these sessions there are of course many contemporary *metteurs en scène* (Visconti, Bergman, Welles, etc) who work concurrently in the cinema and the theatre without finding this a contradiction. But this concerns practice (it's always possible to do two different things, this doesn't constitute an argument).

    A further aspect of the question: there was a period when it was impossible to talk of *differences* between the theatre and the cinema without formulating them as *antagonisms* (ie polemics about the 'art film', and then about 'filmed theatre', etc); and analyses of these differences inevitably led to a claim for the 'superiority' of the one or the other art form. Today this situation has largely been superseded to the joy of the *metteurs en scène*, and rightly so. But the differences remain nevertheless and those who have stressed them in the recent period (for example the André Bazins and the Albert Laffays) were often ardent admirers of both the cinema and the theatre.
98. I have in mind some of the discussions which took place during the sessions mentioned above (note 97).
99. *Op cit*, Volume I, p 60.
100. *Op cit*, the whole of Chapter III (pp 51-90), 'Le récit, le monde et le cinéma'.

101. The superiority referred to relates to the virtual resources of the genre, not to successes already achieved, for Jean Mitry would be the first to admit that the cinema has so far produced very few great 'novelesque' works.
102. See Albert Laffay, *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*), pp 61, 62.
103. *Ibid* p 73.
104. See Christian Metz, 'Remarques pour une phénoménologie du narratif' 1966 reprinted in *Essais* (*op cit*), pp 25-36.
105. *Logique du Cinéma* (*op cit*), *passim*, pp 51-90, particularly p 54.
106. *Le Cinéma et le Temps* (*op cit*), pp 17-23 *passim* in the following pages.
107. cf also Volume I p 371.
108. That is, modern life is *part of the diegesis*, while sheep are not.
109. These propositions make no claim to originality; they are the direct result of a reading of Jean Mitry's analysis and a knowledge of the present state of cinematic terminology on this point. However, I have slightly systematised Jean Mitry's distinctions – perhaps rather more than he would wish. And on the other hand I have extended and modified his terminology: extended because he does not suggest any fixed expression to distinguish the set of pseudo-metaphors and pseudo-comparisons from other kinds of filmic juxtapositions (ie those that suggest something other than resemblance); modified because the terms 'relation' (where I have 'juxtaposition'), 'implicative' (where I have 'metaphorical') and 'analogical' (where I have 'comparative', which Mitry uses concurrently) seem to me less 'generally understood' than the ones I have suggested. 'Relation' is vaguer and wider than 'juxtaposition'; 'implicative' applies to too many filmic phenomena; 'analogical' clearly implies a comparative semantism rather than a metaphorical semantism, but does not exclude the latter clearly enough.
110. In *Essais de Linguistique Générale* (Paris, ed de Minuit, 1963) Roman Jakobson distinguishes (p 62) two aspects of contiguity: *positional* contiguity (ie contiguity in the discourse, syntagmatic contiguity) and *semantic* contiguity (ie contiguity in reality). Contiguities which bring about *metonymies* are semantic contiguities (ie 'sail' for 'boat'). On p 447 on his book Jean Mitry expresses two ideas which seem to me to be equally correct but not distinguished from one another clearly enough: (1) On the one hand *positional* contiguity ('montage-effect' in its widest form) plays a central role in 'cinematic language': the importance of juxtapositions, of all sorts of combinations etc . . . this is the topic of cinema as a 'syntagmatic art'. (2) On the other hand many of the 'figures' of cinematic expression act on the *semantic* contiguity of filmic motifs and *to this extent* become kinds of metonymies. Eisenstein had already observed that the 'close up' is a synecdoche (ie the part for the whole; it is worth noting that the synecdoche is one of the principal forms of metonymy). Jean Mitry in his turn observes (p 447) that many so-called 'filmic metaphors' are in fact much closer to metonymy (ie an element of the diegesis emphasised visually by a specific process comes to symbolise a whole aspect of the drama in which it has been effectively enmeshed). These two characteristics of cinematic language are of equal importance but different: filmic 'metonymy' alone is not sufficient basis for calling the cinema a syntagmatic art (for this metonymy plays on the contiguities of reality); and the importance of juxtapositions of all orders in films alone is not sufficient basis for calling the cinema a metonymic art (for these are juxtapositions within the filmic chain). This does not prevent the cinema from frequently playing on both

forms of contiguity *within the same 'figure'*.

111. Christian Metz, *Le Cinéma: Langue ou Langage?* (*op cit*).
112. cf Christian Metz, *Le Cinéma: Langue ou Langage?* (*op cit*).
113. *Film als Kunst* (*op cit*) pp 219, 220.
114. *Mercure de France,* June 1962, and *Diogène,* July-September 1961 ('Cinéma et langage').
115. cf Christian Metz, 'Les sémiotiques, ou sémies (a propos des travaux de Louis Hjelmslev et d'André Martinet)', in *Communications,* no 7, 1966, pp 146-157, particularly pp 154-156.
116. cf the whole last part ('*connotations and metalanguages*') of *Prologomena to a Theory of Language,* 1953, Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics (originally published in Danish, 1943).
117. I have in mind here the distinction between the represented and the expressed as made by Mikel Dufrenne in numerous passages of his *Phénoménologie de l'Expérience esthétique* (*op cit*).
118. See p 62 in this article.

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Translated by Diana Matias.

Notes on Women's Cinema

The image of women in the cinema has been an image created by men. The emergent women's cinema has begun the transformation of that image. These notes explore ideas and strategies developed in women's films.

Edited by CLAIRE JOHNSTON

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Christian Metz

In discussions relating to the cinema or to films the 'form' and 'content' opposition is used frequently as a basic terminological distinction (as is the opposition between 'form' and 'substance', 'substance' in this case being used as a synonym for 'content').

The aim of this article is to render explicit what this much-invoked bipartition implies and conceals. In my view it is both confused and dangerous, but it is precisely in trying to disentangle what it entangles that there is some possibility of advance.

I

In a great many cases the term 'form' designates the film *signifier* (ie 'expression' in Hjelmslev's sense), and the term 'content' its *signified* ('content' in Hjelmslev also). Thus, in current terms, a film might for example be spoken of as having a form that was brilliant, complex, new, while its content was poor, simplistic or banal.

It is of course true that at any given point in the analysis of any given film, it is possible to isolate a signifying instance and a signified instance (although the same element of the film may at different times function as signifier or signified, according to the level of meaning being analysed). And, taking the film as a whole this time, it is also possible to distinguish both a set of signifiers (images and their organisation, words spoken, sounds heard, the characters' dress and facial expressions, and possibly the presence of specific psychoanalytic, social or ideological 'symbols', etc), and a body of signifieds (the psychology of the characters, the social content of the film, the ideological 'message' of the film-maker, etc).

But the terminology under criticism misrepresents the signifier/signified distinction in that the word that designates the signified (ie 'content') is here opposed, not to some term which clearly designates the signifier but to 'form'; and just the presence of this word 'form' ensures that the signifier/signified distinction is in a half-conscious way infiltrated by the form/substance distinction. The signifier is not clearly named as such but designated by a term (ie 'form') which is the opposition of substance; and inversely, this 'form' is not distinguished from something which clearly designates substance, but from a term (ie 'content') which is elsewhere used as an opposition to expression, or in other words, the signifier. The result is that the terminology in question carries the latent suggestion (even doubly, as will be seen) of a kind of privileged relationship between the facts of the signifier and the

facts of form on the one hand, and the facts of the signified and the facts of substance on the other; it seems to sustain without ever quite making explicit the notion that the signifier has a form – or is form? – while the signified does not; and equally, that the signified has a substance – or is substance? – while the signifier does not.

It is in this way that the distinction between signifier and signified which in itself is fairly clear, is almost totally obliterated: analyses of this kind ignore, or at least neglect in practice, the fact that if the signifying elements of the film have a form (for example montage, oppositions between motifs, counterpointing of image and sound, image and word, etc), they also have a substance – in fact four different substances* the moving photographic image, recorded musical sound, recorded phonetic sound, and recorded noises. And inversely, the signified elements of the film not only have their substance (the ' human ' or ' social ' semantics out of which the different film contents are sectioned), they also have a form: hence the profound structure of the ' themes '[1] in every film.

In the usual language of debates on the cinema, to study the ' form ' of a film implies studying the film as a body of signifiers. Questions of substance may enter into this ' formal ' study (consideration is often given for example to the comparative effectiveness of the visual and auditive signifiers) but only insofar as they relate to the substance of the signifier. What ' a study of the form of a film ' would mean in reality is a study of the film as a whole which aimed at analysing its organisation and structure: in other words, a structural analysis where the structure concerned is both that of images and sounds (ie the form of the signifier) and that of emotions and ideas (ie the form of the signified).

Inversely, what a study of the ' content ' usually designates is a study related mainly to the substance of the content: a fairly unorganised enumeration and description of the ' human ' problems the film raises, and their intrinsic importance, but no real examina-

* At the time of writing this article I did not attribute great importance to the *graphic material*, that is to the graphic outline of written items (credits, various inscriptions incorporated into the image, inter-titles in the silent film, etc.) This writing does in fact figure in the image strip and not separate from it; moreover it is also traditionally seen as secondary. In the intervening period I have come to realise that this under-estimation is pure prejudice. For example, inter-titles play an important role in certain films like Eisenstein's *Strike*, or Solanas' *Hour of the Furnaces*. Besides, as a signifier of a physical type, the graphic outline distinguishes itself from the moving image and *is not* itself a moving image, even if like moving image (and sometimes in interaction with it) it is inscribed into the image-strip. For this reason, in *Langage et cinéma*, I have listed five material categories of signifiers instead of four.

tion of the specific form which the film in question gives them. A true ' study of the content of a film ' on the other hand would be just that – a study of the form of the content. Otherwise the discussion is no longer about the film, but about the various very general problems from which the film takes its starting material, its own content remaining in every sense distinct.

This telescoping of two different and independent methodological distinctions (signifier/signified and form/substance) into a single conceptual pair (' form/content ') is one of the main reasons for an unfortunate state of affairs by now so general and entrenched in work on the cinema that it muse be obvious to all those concerned in the field.

The prevailing tendency is to think that any obligation to produce rigorous and exact (so-called ' formal ') analyses is restricted to the field of the filmic signifiers (not that such analyses are always, or even often, the practice, but at least the feeling that they are desirable is fairly widespread). And on the other hand it is considered natural and *legitimate* for the study of filmic signifieds to rest on the sole sensitivity of the analyst, or on his personal responses and feelings towards the film, and possibly even his political opinions and existential choices, etc. The fact that the film criticism published by the press concentrates for the most part on just the signifieds is occasionally deplored – with good cause. But the reason is precisely that the body of impressionist criticism considers itself *entitled* to remain what it is so long as it is dealing only with the filmic signifieds (ie ' content ' and not ' form '); whereas maintaining the same approach for the signifying elements of the film would be seen as a transgression (these being ' form '). Any attempt at a discussion of the signifiers is therefore quite often more or less completely abandoned; ' form ' is then re-baptised ' cinematic technique ' – a term of disparagement which justifies the absence of any study of the area in terms of the ' low human interest ' of the questions thus ignored.

II

But this is not where the matter ends. The common ' form ' and ' content ' opposition does not restrict itself to juggling with two different distinctions. In many discussions on the cinema it implicates yet a third which also has a claim to be clearly distinguished from the first and the second. The word ' form ' covers – or is allowed to cover – a whole body of processes which are *by nature cinematic*, while ' content ' covers the social material which features in the film without being in any sense cinematic in itself: in these terms, what comes into the category of ' the cinematic ' is form and form alone, while ' content ' is simply something recruited by the film in the way that it might be by a play or a novel.

This does indeed touch on another methodological distinction

92 which would be clear and productive if it were not confused with others. The same film clearly does contain two kinds of *significations* (understood in the Saussurian sense of a signifier/signified pair): those which can only appear by virtue of being conveyed by the filmic vehicle, and those which, while they number film among the locations in which they appear, nonetheless have their origins in some other cultural-signifying body. The former case includes for example the main forms of editing, the main ways of combining image and sound, or image and word, etc.[2] The latter – to give just one example – includes the group of *dress significations* which play such an important part in films: the psycho-sociological place of film characters is often partially expressed by the way they dress. Thus a narrow-shouldered, slim-waisted suit in some soft shade of fine corduroy in a French film made in 1967 designates the elegant, slightly effeminate rich young man of the 16th *arrondissement* while a cap and overall point to a signified of the 'worker' type. But obviously, the film has played no part in the formation of this kind of paradigm which would have established itself regardless, eg in just the isolated image not due to any film (like a photograph), or possibly even outside any image in the real perceptions of the observer who would have encountered people dressed that way walking through the streets of Paris. This therefore is an extra-cinematic signified *recruited* by the film.

But this distinction, correct and important in itself, is blurred and confused with others in those cases (unfortunately the majority) where 'form/content' is the only terminological pair utilised. For in this usage the word 'form' – itself already confused with the 'signifier', as was demonstrated earlier, brings a double error to bear on the properly cinematic significations: it implies (a) that everything which is specifically filmic concerns only the signifier[3] (the signifier thus being mysteriously deprived of any corresponding signified so that it is no longer clear even in what sense it is a signifier); and (b) that everything specifically filmic is purely a question of form, without any corresponding substance. And inversely, the use of the word 'content' – already, as we saw, confused with 'substance' – also sets up two unfortunate implications for the extra-cinematic significations recruited by films: namely, that everything in films which derives from somewhere other than cinema is (a) pure substance without any corresponding form – that is, without a structural organisation; and (b) has to be unilaterally attributed to the field of the signified (the signified thus being deprived of a specific corresponding signifier).

An examination of current literature on the cinema would yield up numerous examples of these four latent ideas whose formulation is moreover never carried through to the end. (For the attempt to make them explicit would inevitably reveal that they

lead to an impasse and have to be rejected.) Taking up these notions again in the same order:

1. The specific elements of cinematic language are often envisaged as consisting of a range of signifiers and nothing more (hence the use of terms like ' processes ', ' stylistic features ', ' means of expression ', ' film rhetoric ', etc[4]). It is by no means rare therefore to come across the implicit notion that adapting a novel for the screen is a matter of finding other signifiers for the same signified (cf. note 3).
2. Equally common is the notion that cinematic language is truly ' cinematic ' only in terms of form and can therefore be described as a body of recognisable configurations (such as those which make up montage). This overlooks the fact that the moving image and the human voice – to take just two examples – are also instances of substance without which the configurations evoked would have no means of manifesting themselves and nothing out of which they could be sectioned materially.
3. Where a signification of extra-cinematic origin occurs in a film it is all too often accepted as a fact of pure substance (a ' social fact ' for example) which therefore simply calls for a free interpretation of an affective rather than an analytic kind. Hence for example assertions that the emotions of film characters are ' true ', ' moving ', ' nicely-observed ', etc.
4. The extra-cinematic elements of a film are treated as pure signifieds: their intrinsic social relevance is discussed outside any attempt to locate accurately their corresponding signifiers in the particular film examined.

In what follows, an effort will be made to outline the tasks which the four points raised (taken in the same order) set up for a rigorous analysis of a filmic corpus.

1. The cinematic codifications proper do in fact entail a range of signifiers – these being the ' audio-visual ' configurations (*plus the verbo-visual and verbo-auditive* – a fact too often overlooked) which impinge on the perceptions of the spectator. But by their very presence, these signifiers section a body of corresponding and no less specific signifieds in the total meaning of the film. ' Cinematic language ' is therefore not a range of signifiers, but a range of significations: to take an example ' parallel montage ' so-called is not simply an A-B-A-B-A-etc scheme of distribution in the arrangement of images – it also has a meaning. It indicates that globally, events A and events B are seen as contemporary in the diegesis of the film (and in saying this one is still only at the level of the signified of denotation for parallel montage, which has in addition a variety of connoted meanings: it suggests for example a closer and more ' intimate ' kind of simultaneity in affective and symbolic terms than might be expressed by a different organisation of images).

94 2. While it is true that there exist forms-of-the-signifier which are by nature cinematic, there are *also* substances-of-the-signifier which specifically characterise the filmic vehicle. This can be understood on two levels, both of which merit attention on condition that they are kept separate:

(a) Of the four signifying substances which together make up the total perceptual materiality of the film (the moving photographic image, recorded noise, recorded music and recorded phonetic sound), there is one which can be claimed to be specifically cinematic in the sense that it is not used by any other means of expression existing in society except perhaps television (which is closely related to the cinema, at least from the standpoint in question here): this is obviously the moving photographic image.

(b) The three remaining signifying substances (noise, musical sound and phonetic sound) could not be characterised as ' specifically cinematic ' *in the same sense* since each of them is in other contexts the signifying substance of one or more signification systems other than the cinema: for phonetic sound this is natural language; for musical sound – music; for noise – radio, so-called concrete music, or quite simply everyday noises taken as a set of significations – as for example, hearing the sound of a car horn induces the inference that a car is passing nearby).

However, when these same three signifying substances are used *in a film* – ie in a new and radically different context where each is ' caught ' with the two others and with the moving image in an original network of interactions which are moreover tighter and more organised than in any other case – it is questionable how far these are still the *same* substances and how far the new ' counterpointings ' just referred to can be thought to exclusively concern the *form* these substances manifest without affecting their status as substance. At the present stage of research on the cinema it is not easy to determine whether the sound heard in the street and the sound heard on the sound-track of a film are one and the same substance, or whether they are not rather two different substances extracted from the same *matter* (understood in the precise sense which Hjelmslev gives to this concept and its distinctions from substance; for Hjelmslev the latter designates matter already semiotically-formed,[5] which might possibly be described as *cinematic* sound, the corresponding matter than being sound in general).*

* It is the second solution which despite its complexity (or rather because of it) allows for a better understanding of the relations between the different substances of the signifier and the different forms (therefore between the various ' languages ' (*langages*) and the various *codes*). True, one must distinguish between different matters (*matières*) in themselves, and these matters insofar as they manifest a form, for the

If this proved to be the case, cinematic language proper would be 'specific' not just through one of the four signifying substances it uses (ie the moving image), but equally, albeit to a rather different degree,** through the three others: phonetic sound in films, noise and music recorded on the film sound-track. It is also possible of course that the preceding outline may hold only for noise, and not for phonetic production or music.

3. The signifieds of extra-cinematic origin which appear in films clearly have a substance – semantic substance in this case. But they also have their form, and belong to organised sets of signifiers. The reason this is frequently overlooked by film criticism is that the form and the signifying bodies in question are distinct from 'cinematic language'. To this extent it is admissible to ignore them in an analysis of the *cinematic codifications proper*, but they obviously cannot be ignored by an analysis centred on the *total signification of a particular film* since these signifieds (though cast, ie 'formed', somewhere other than the cinema) are nonetheless present in the film. Whether they are studied in detail or not is a choice which rests solely on the precise object which any piece of research sets itself, but in any case, the claim that the main concern is with 'the cinema' should never serve as a pretext for ignoring the fact that an *extra-cinematic* semantism is not *amorphous*. While its form is not produced by manipulation of the filmic vehicle, it is produced by the manipulation of some other equally socio-cultural and historical signifying ensemble which is just as much an organised bearer of meaning.

Reference was made earlier to the signifieds of dress which films

same matter – noise in my example – can manifest several codes, some of which are proper to the cinema and some of which are common to the cinema and everyday life: this is the real force of the Hjelmslevian opposition between substance and matter. It is moreover possible to formulate it in a simplified and more accessible way while still preserving its theoretical value. The 'matter already semiotically formed' referred to in this passage does not require a special term (contrary to the view taken by Hjelmslev who proposed 'substance' for this purpose) since this instance, in definitive terms, is simply the result of the *work* of code X in matter Y. At the same time we could agree to use *matter* (like Hjelmslev himself – but without the matter/substance coupling) for the different types of signifiers in their intrinsic physical definition; these have, as in this article, been dubbed 'substances' by post-Hjelmslevian usage – a development favourised by the textual subtleties of Hjelmslev's work which I have tried to elucidate in the meantime. In this way (cf *Langage et Cinéma*) one can reduce the terms to two: on the one hand, the matter of the signifier which constitutes the physical specificity of each '*langage*'; on the other hand, the form of that signifier imparted to it (as it is to the corresponding signified) by the different codes working on that matter whether these codes are specific or not to the language in question.

** I have returned to and developed this hypothesis on the *degrees of specificity* in *Langage et Cinéma*.

often ' recruit ' but do not originate. Beyond the film, which simply actualises them (possibly *partially remodelling* them in passing), these signifieds relate back to the dress culture of the social group concerned. This is a different signifying set characterised by profound structures which account for the signifieds in question (and are obviously not to be found in the cinema).

Two things have therefore to be clearly distinguished: *Cinematic language proper* and *the total communication of each particular film*. The latter is simply the particular combination (differing from film to film) of two kinds of elements: those which belong to cinematic language, and those which derive from other cultural systems. All too often the expression ' cinematic language ' is used in a very vague sense to designate the body of significations which appear in the cinema.

4. Among the extra-cinematic elements of the film there are of course some which belong to the signified instance of the film (remembering that as always in the case of signifiers and signifieds, these elements can function as signifieds at one of the many levels which compose a film, while remaining free to function as signifiers – or again as significations – at another level). But alongside these extra-cinematic ' signified ' elements there exist corresponding signifiers, and these signifiers, like their signifieds, can be described as external to the cinema, but recruited by the film. In our earlier example of dress-significations integrated into a film, the *signified* ' worker ' is not all that is involved, for there is a corresponding *signifier* which is equally ' integrated into that film ' (ie the cap and overalls in our simplified example).

III

Clearly therefore, the ' form/content ' terminological pair which is the object of this critique and the one most frequently relied on in debates on the cinema, has a major disadvantage: It introduces into discussions a *single* notional couple which, because it is not accompanied by two other clearly formulated pairs, ends by operating three confused distinctions at the same time.

In the present situation it is quite often the case that a critic discussing form has more or less three things in mind *at the same time:* the film signifier (as opposed to its signified, which he would call ' content '); the structural organisation of the particular film (as opposed to the various substances which the film activates, which he would also call ' content ')[6]; and finally, whatever is most cinematic in that film (as opposed to the various widely cultural significations that the film simply recruits, which he would again call ' content '). The aim of the following brief proposals is to stress the necessity for any rigorous film analysis to reject anything that neutralises or breaks down the distinctions between three operational and methodological oppositions which only remain

clear on condition that their separation is maintained.

1. The term *signified* in a film is proposed for any element which provides a signified instance for which analysis can accurately distinguish (for instance by commutation) a corresponding signifier,[7] at some precisely determined level of meaning in the film (for example, the film as indirect sociological evidence, an expression of the individual personality of the film-maker, a work of art, a denoted narrative, a body of connotations evoked by the narrative, etc . . .).

Example: if the level of analysis is the film as a specific vehicle, conveying a narrative considered in its denoted aspect, it is possible to distinguish the signifier ' Distribution of images according to an A-B-A-B-scheme ', and its corresponding signified (global simultaneity between events – series A and events – series B). At the level specified, the totality of this signifier and signified constitutes the *signification* ' parallel montage '. But for someone studying the film-maker's style in the same film (ie a study of the connotation), parallel montage – which was just now seen as the sum of a signifier and a signified – would pass in its entirety to the side of the signifier alone; for it would now be possible to determine a *new* corresponding signified: the utilisation or non-utilisation of parallel montage tells us something about the film-maker's style in the film concerned.

2. The next proposal is for a distinction between instances of *form* and instances of *substance* in both the signifier and the signified. At the level of the film as a whole, the substance of the signified is the ' social content ' of the cinematic discourse; the form of the signified is the profound semantic structure (sometimes called ' thematic structure ') which organises the social content in that film, and which also explains why *other* films could – and often have been – made on the basis of a largely similar overall content. The substance of the signifier (or rather the substances of the signifier since film is a ' composite language ') are the moving photographic image, recorded noise, phonetic sound, recorded musical sound – and all the consequences entailed by the fact that the film has recourse to these four substances rather than others (comparing it for example with cartoons, still photography, silent cinema, radio broadcasting, etc).

The form of the signifier is the set of perceptual configurations recognisable in these four substances: for example, the regular recurrence of a syntagmatic association between a particular phrase of dialogue and some visual motif, etc.

Like the distinction between signifier and signified, the distinction between form and substance acts at different levels of meaning in such a way that the same element can derive from either form or substance at two different points in the analysis. To take an example, in this case from the field of the signified: an analysis of the total cinematic output of a particular country occasioned

say, by an annual ' season ' of that country's films, might call for a comparison between the war film (taken globally) and other films not concerned with war (like the ' love story ', the crime film, etc). In such an analysis semantisms of the ' war ', ' love ', ' crime narrative ' kind already have an organisation – a specific semantic articulation within a wider semantic web (like ' the social content of films ') which *at this level* functions as the substance of the signified. But if the analysis moves into the particular war film (still at the level of the signified) and studies the internal organisation of the different sequences (' preparations for battle ', ' battle ', ' scene of the battlefield after the engagement '[8]), the semantic elements listed become the units of the form of the signified, and the notion of ' war ' now functions as the substance of the signified since it is from this basis that the form can now be more precisely determined.[9]

3. *Both* the signifying and the signified elements (ie the body of *significations* actualised by a particular film) contain: (a) some elements which belong to the cinema in its capacity as a specific vehicle constituting *one* of the signifying sets operating in our culture; (b) others which appear in a particular *film* (and therefore belong to *another* signifying set constituted by each film as a total and particular communication), but nevertheless do not owe their organisation or meaning to the cinematic vehicle (which recruits but does not form them); the latter originate rather in a particular signifying set of a *third* kind (eg: various systems of collective representations, symbolisms linked to ' objects ',[10] gestures, facial expressions, etc) which in the last analysis also relate back to the global society and culture – like the cinematic codes proper and the film as a total communication, but separately from them.

For these two categories of significations the term ' *filmic* significations (or elements) ' and ' *filmed* significations (or elements) ' might be proposed.*

The filmic significations and the filmed significations each have their signifiers and their signifieds. The two kinds of signifiers and the two kinds of signifieds coexist within the film as total com-

* I elaborated this distinction between the ' specific ' contributions and the non-specific contributions systematically in *Langage et Cinéma*. On that occasion I realised that the corresponding terminology could be improved upon. The elements of the two categories defined here in fact have a trait in common in that they both appear, materially, in films. They can therefore both be said to be ' filmic ' (and, obviously, ' filmed '); to this extent the *filmic/filmed* pair is not very useful to differentiate between them effectively. I therefore retained *filmic* as a common designation, and thus attempted to remedy the lack in this article, which proposed no term for their regrouping; within the filmic material so defined I attempted, in this context, to establish a more detailed distinction between the *cinematic* and the *extra-cinematic* elements. The cinematic is always filmic, but the filmic is not always cinematic.

munication. But where these are adopted by some non-cinematic vehicle – by transposition into book form for example – it is possible (if this is carefully done) for the filmed significations to be essentially preserved, but the filmic signifiers *and signifieds* will be irrevocably lost, for they can only be replaced by very feeble and basically inaccurate ' equivalents '.

Notes

1. This use of the term ' theme ' should not be taken to mean that the theme would *necessarily* be the *pertinent unit* finally abstracted in an analysis of the form of the signified. For example, at a later stage of the analysis it may be possible to break down many of the elements normally thought of as constituting a *single* theme into several semantic units each of which would be ' smaller ' than a complete theme. Such a situation would not be peculiar to the cinema; it derives from a very general semiological phenomenon to which the works of A J Greimas have drawn attention: it is quite possible for the semantic units of the profound structure not to coincide with the units of manifestation, which can appear as varieties of *fixed syntagms on the level of the signified* – that is, conventionalised combinations of several distinct basic units.

   Use has nevertheless been made of the term *theme* (which has the advantage of being a term firmly embedded in general usage) because even in the hypothesis just raised, the basic units remain of the same *nature* (in terms of substance) as what current language refers to as ' theme ', differing only in their *dimensions* and mutual *position* in the system (ie in formal characteristics). Simplifying this slightly, these basic units could be said to be *fragments* of themes, but also fragments of *themes*.
2. My own ' *Grande Syntagmatique de la bande-image* ' (*Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma* (Paris, Klincksieck, 1968), particularly text no 5, chapter II) attempts to bring out a particularly typical example of the cinematic codifications proper in the sense put forward here.
3. Note nevertheless that *in a particular sense* it is not wrong to consider ' the cinema ' as such as consisting solely of a system of signifiers: this is true – or rather becomes true again – at the level of major units. The cinema (like, in this respect, literature, painting, etc) does not delimit a ' semantic field ' proper to itself. In this sense it differs from the systems constituted for example by the terms of colour, kinship, traffic lights, etc which at all points have a clearly determined corresponding sector of semantic substance; for example the traffic light system has its own ' major signified ' (ie the question of whether or not to cross for pedestrians and vehicles). There is nothing comparable to this in the cinema. Neither the film as a whole (nor *a fortiori* a group of films), nor the cinema as a whole is linked to any ' major signified ' which could be called ' cinematic '. The filmic signifieds – *as long as they are considered in their globality* – are simply ' human ' (social) and could just as well be recruited by literature, philosophic discourse or the innumerable statements in everyday life. This is due to the fact that the cinema, like literature, is virtually ' capable of expressing everything ' and does not constitute a code specialised in the expression of certain determined areas of meaning. (Observations which, though not related to the cinema, are on precisely these lines can

be found in the works of L Hjelmslev, R Barthes, and A J Greimas.)

But at the level of the smaller units – that is, precisely those units which analysis tries to isolate in a detailed study of a film – the cinema breaks out of the unilateral status of a signifier without a specific corresponding signified: clearly for example, each of the particular 'figures' of montage have a signified which is in this case cinematic by nature in the sense that other signifying systems (verbal language, various kinds of graphics, etc) can only reflect upon it, approach it indirectly, possibly analyse it, but not express it, and that this signified has therefore only one signifier which is that particular figure of montage itself.

It is this double and contradictory status of the cinematic vehicle (both *specific* and *non-specific* at one and the same time) which accounts for a state of affairs often remarked on in discussions related to *adaptations* of novels for the screen: it is always possible to 'transpose' the global substance of the book into film, but each page (paragraph, chapter) is nevertheless irrevocably 'betrayed'.

4. I am not concerned to banish terms like 'stylistic feature', 'process', etc (which I often use myself) from the field of cinematic studies. It is simply a question of being on guard against the latent implications of this kind of vocabulary (which directs attention unilaterally to the level of the signifier) and considering each of these 'processes' and 'features' as a process or feature of *signification* which therefore has both a signifier and a signified. In this connection it should be borne in mind that any purging of terminology which strives to be too rigorously 'scientific' runs the risk of only achieving a situation where nobody can say anything anymore. It was Charles Sanders Peirce himself who observed that in the language of the most exact sciences a certain dosage of polysemy was an essential part of the progress and life of research. (*Collected Papers*, Vol II, '*Elements of Logic*', Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1932, p 130).
5. *L. Hjelmslev*, '*La Stratification du Langage*', in *Word* 10, 163-188. Reprinted in *Essais Linguistiques* (Copenhagen, Nordisk Sprog Og Kulturforlag, 1959) pp 36-68, passage quoted pp 49-50.
6. As we saw in Part I, it is usually to designate the substance of the *signified* that the current language of film criticism uses 'content'. But there are other (though more rare) cases where this term is aimed in a confused way at something which is – at least in part – the substance of the *signifier:* as for example in discussions where the 'visual content of the image' is opposed to the 'form' of that same image.
7. There is an obvious problem in the usage of the terms 'signifier' and 'signified' proposed here: strictly speaking these terms can only be applied to the signifying-face or the signified-face of a *sign* (ie the *minimum* semantic unit) and not to the signifying-face and signified-face of a complete discourse (eg the film,) or a complete section of that discourse (eg the film sequence).

However, it is relatively easy to avoid this problem, in particular by resorting to specifications like '*total* signified of the film' 'signified of the *sequence*', '*minimum* signifier', etc. One can also restrict the unqualified 'signifier' and 'signified' usage to references to the minimum sign, in other cases speaking of the 'signifying-face' or 'signified-face' (a solution which avoids the danger mentioned, while preserving the words 'signifier' and 'signified').

These words have the advantage of being more or less clear to everyone, whereas Hjelmslev's terminology 'expression/content'

while undoubtedly preferable from a purely theoretical point of view, in practice provokes endless and insoluble misunderstandings with non-linguists. This is particularly true in the field of the semiotics of art, since terms like 'content' and 'expression' each have a particularly weighty history in art criticism.

8. The ideas invoked here ('*war* film', '*love story*', '*preparation for battle* sequence', etc) are simply intended to give a more 'general' notion of what is meant. For obviously, in a given piece of research it will not necessarily be these semantisms which will constitute the pertinent units.
9. The 'form/substance' opposition as it has been presented here is not necessarily absolutely faithful to what Hjelmslev understood under this heading (which is moreover not easy to establish *completely*). Two different aspects of his work have to be distinguished: the idea of disassociating the 'form/substance' opposition from the 'content/expression' (ie signifier/signified) opposition is perfectly clear and represents a decisive contribution to work in the field; but the *intrinsic* definition of the 'form/substance' opposition in Hjelmslev's work, whatever may be said on the subject from time to time, remains at the level of a brilliant intuition lacking an explicit, complete and unified formulation. (It is moreover not easy for anyone to *think* such an opposition through to the end). Hjelmslev's texts on the subject vary among themselves, if not in essence, at least on certain details of formulation which become important as soon as one broaches particular areas of his research: eg the problem of the third term 'matter' (ie 'purport') which is more or less indispensible according to the particular text examined; the periodic introduction of the notion of 'substantial form' (which the author moreover rejects, or at least judges to be inadequate); the quasi-affirmation, on one or two occasions, that a recourse to the substance is indispensable for the commutation and identification of units (an idea which is difficult to reconcile with the rejection of substantial form in favour of pure form), etc.
10. The usage made here of the word 'object' calls for the same remarks as those made on the word 'theme' (of note 1). The object may not always be the pertinent profound unit (or, in A J Greimas' terms: the object may correspond, not to the level of the seme, but to the level of the semene, read the lexeme; that is, to the combination-of-several-semes which belongs only to the instance of manifestation and not to the profound structure). But the notion of 'symbolisms attached to objects' as used here also comprehends those symbolisms attached to semes 'of the object' in any case the object (or what it conceals) is very much a part of the 'extra-cinematic' significations which appear in films. (This should not be confused with the different problem of *the characteristically cinematic treatment of objects*, or what they conceal: this problem also exists, but is distinct from the one under consideration here.)

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Translated by Diana Matias.

Stephen Heath

'Question de méthode . . .
Moi,
moi apprendre,
leur apprendre,
et à moi,
à r(
contre l'ennemi
l'arme
avec laquelle
dans le fond des choses il nous attaque: —
le langage.'
(Juliet Berto in Jean-Luc Godard's *Le Gai Savoir*)

Note

The following piece was written in December 1970 as a brief introduction to the work on a semiology of film being pursued in France and, in particular, to the elements of such a semiology proposed by Christian Metz in his first volume of Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma. *Hence its dual set of limitations; those of simplicity (it was a question at the time of an introduction that would demand no prior knowledge of semiology) and those of scope (the essay inevitably takes no account of various developments and arguments that have been important since 1970, including those developments made by Metz himself in subsequent work). These limitations go hand in hand with a certain naivety that needs to be corrected in the light of the other articles collected here. If, despite all this, the piece is proposed without any attempt at revisions, it is in so far as it may thus serve as an easy introduction to certain ideas and problems that receive more difficult treatment elsewhere in this issue of* Screen. – *S.H.*

Cinema is truth twenty-four times a second. An assertion that in its use of the notion of 'truth' has been crucial not simply to a general received consumption of film, but also to a whole development of thinking film from Bazin to Pasolini (the names are meant here as exemplary indications; evidently one might return to Louis Lumière) that depends on a vision of cinema as the medium of the expression of reality with reality, a function, to borrow Pasolini's own terms, of the explosion of a love of reality. This kind of explosive love sets cinema as expression *against* language as articulation of reality, whether in a theoretical operation of more or less complex strategy (a Bazin or an Astruc will make cinema a language in terms of a direct transparent expressivity, Pasolini will make it the language of reality itself) or in a

quite liberal manner (as in hostile reactions to the development of the talkie: Rudolf Arnheim in his book *Film as Art*, recently reissued without alteration, indeed with a ' Foreword ' confirming its positions, talks of language as a dangerous ' supplement ', of the talkie as a perverse ' hybrid ', the word, as it were, clouds the direct truth of the image[1]). It is the functioning of the idea of ' truth ' in relation to some idea of the reality function of cinema that, here as elsewhere, has to be questioned. In fact, that opening assertion tells us clearly enough that that ' truth ' is to be questioned in its *formation* (it is only necessary to substitute ' frames ' for ' times ' to read this necessity immediately), is to be questioned at all levels (a term that hides a problem which will be stated later in this essay) in its articulation, including the level of its ideological situation. (This latter is easily and generally vaguely admitted with regard to the phenomenon ' Hollywood ', though even here the analysis, such as has been done and valuable and crucial as it is, tends not to approach the problem of the actual cinetexts).

Cinema, in fact, today occupies amongst the various modes of artistic production the place of the unquestionable, of the *non-discutable*, even (and above all, for there is no paradox) if increasingly covered by a lucubrative chatter ever greater in volume. In this precisely, and significantly, cinema has replaced, or is replacing, the novel which occupied, or occupies, that same place. The term ' non-discutable ' used above was indeed adapted from Henry James's 1884 essay on ' The Art of Fiction ' in which he lamented that the English novel ' had no air of having a theory, a conviction, a consciousness of itself behind it '.[2] James's lament proved ineffectual, even in his own case, where the recognition it implied was accompanied by a body of writing itself destined to assure the continuation of that ' non-discutability ' by virtue of its foundation in a definition of the novel as being exactly *non-discutable*, having the infinite plasticity of life, moving ' in a luxurious independence of rules and restrictions '.[3] That (in)definition is valid – is valued – today, mutatis mutandis, for cinema even amongst those from whom a maximum of theoretical consciousness might be expected. James's formulation can be paralleled by the following from the *Cahiers du Cinéma:*

> it is important . . . to realise that beauty in the cinema knows neither rules nor limits, that it belies the laws to which one believed it to be subject, that it appears as often in the first films as in the latest, that it is ultimately unfaithful and capricious, and that it is less important to rediscover it as it may have been in the past than to be each time surprised anew . . .[4]

Cinema then as perpetual consumption. It is in these terms that cinema is occupying the place of the novel: it is received as *natural*, as *life*, as *beauty*, unfolding, as it were, outside any concrete

process of the production of meaning, and thus unavailable to any theoretical reflection (which has nothing to do with what is commonly known as ' criticism ', mere repetition of the forms of the ideological consensus). All that is left is surprise. That quotation from the *Cahiers* comes, in fact, from an article devoted to the revaluation of the famous ' *politique des auteurs* ', there put aside in favour of a new all-embracing response to cinema's mysterious capriciousness. In retrospect, however, the auteur theory can be clearly seen to have been itself an option for not thinking cinema in its emphasis on the triumphant self-expression of the author, opposing finally in this way a mythical expressivity to an analysis of the structuration of the cinetext. The parallel with Henry James can be continued in this connection, for what after all, does James follow through in the bulk of his critical essays in his analyses – after Sainte-Beuve's adage ' Tel arbre, tel fruit ' – of the individual ' case ' but a *politique des auteurs?* Cinema then, as the novel before and still, is currently jammed in a *naturalism* that tends to repress all consciousness of cinema as *process* of consciousness, as *articulation* of the real, as *real articulation.*

The ' truth ' of cinema is to be interrogated in its formation. Today (today meaning over the last ten years or so) semiotics is constituting itself as the point of this interrogation at the same time that a certain *practice of cinema* is itself refusing the unreflexive ' innocence ' of the films that are produced in overwhelming number alongside it, that is itself deconstructing the naturalism of that cinema, working on cinema as process of production of meanings and comprehending itself in its very practice: a cinema no longer of films, but of *texts.* It is with an exploration of this double operation that the present essay is concerned, although necessarily in a fragmented and heavily limited manner: it is a question in what follows at once of locating the points of development of that semiotics (points that are all points of debate at this stage of research) and of suggesting the area and the vitality of that *practice of cinema* in developing a little the notion of the film as *text.*[5]

The discussion of semiotics in relation to cinema that follows makes no attempt to provide any general historical account of its development from the proposals made for a science of signs at the beginning of this century by Peirce and Saussure. Such an account has been furnished, in the very context of a consideration of cinema, by Peter Wollen in his *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* and the reader is referred to that work.[6] In what Roland Barthes refers to as ' the short history of semiology ' since those proposals (' semiology ', it may be recalled, is the name given by Saussure to the proposed general science of signs), the elaboration of a semiotic description of cinema has been attempted above all in the work of Christian Metz and the discussion of semiotics and cinema undertaken here may well be regarded as a *reading* of Metz's

Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma.[7] That reading will be organised, more or less, in sections parallel to those used by Barthes in his semiotic primer *Elements of Semiology.*[8]

There remains simply the initial location of the object of a cinesemiotics (term used henceforth for the semiotic description of cinema). The constitution of its object is the basis of semiotic activity: it is in the constitution of its object, the separation, in Saussurian terms, of *langue* from the heterogeneous phenomenon of *langage*, that linguistics, for example, constitutes itself as science. This process of the constitution of its object is, indeed, in these terms, the 'neuralgic point' of current cinesemiotics at least since a famous article by Metz entitled 'Le cinéma, langue ou langage?'.[9] It is not this, however, that is in question here for the moment, but rather the simple specification within the vast area of 'the cinema' of the field of a cinesemiotics. That field will be taken as the *cinetext*(s); that is, as what is commonly understood by 'film' (as 'finished work'), but regarded not as object of consumption (surprise), regarded as, on the contrary, set of signifying systems, the activity of which is to be described. The concept of the *cinetext* includes the possibility of calling into question such notions as 'finished work', of reinserting the 'film' in a general process of production of meanings.

I

Langue/Parole: One of the major emphases of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics* was, then, the insistence on the need to operate within the general faculty of *langage* a distinction, within which is found the object of linguistics between *langue* and *parole.* Thus the tripartite articulation, *langage – langue – parole:* where the first is the general phenomenon and the third the individual moments of language use, particular utterances, the second is the transindividual system or code ('le code de la langue'[10]) of elements and rules underlying and assuring individual messages. *Langue* and *parole* are thus in a complex relationship of, as it were, inter-realisation: *langue* is realised in *parole*, but there is no *parole* without *langue.* It is impossible to think *parole* as in some sense *before langue*, 'since any *parole*, as soon as it is grasped as a process of communication, is *already* a realisation of *langue*'.[11] The problem of *origin* loses its sense: it is not a question of tracing an 'evolutionary' development of language to greater complexity and perfection, but of describing structural transformation. *Parole* is always already the realisation of a complex structural reality ('every language so far studied, no matter how "backward" or "uncivilised" the people speaking it, has proved on investigation to be a complex and highly developed system of communication'[12]) which it is the task of linguistics to describe in its operation of the abstraction of *langue* from *langage.* (It is perhaps worth mentioning here that the Saussurian *langue/parole*

distinction has been recast (which does not mean abandoned) by Chomsky in terms of *competence* (' the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language ')/*performance* (' the actual use of language in concrete situations ') in the development of a linguistics within which the formal conditions of ' creative ' individual acts of speech can be described. The limitations for Chomsky of the Saussurian model depend on its inability to ' come to grips with the recursive processes underlying sentence formation ', it appearing to ' regard sentence formation as a matter of *parole* rather than *langue* '.[13] Chomsky thus, as it were, resites the position of the levels of *langue/parole* in terms of deep and surface structures describing the former as system of generative processes rather than store of signs. In the actual stage of development of semiotics the Saussurian model has lost none of its operational validity and may prove to be better adaptable to semiotic systems other than *langue* itself than the Chomskyan.

The *langue/parole* model is, as was said above, the ' neuralgic point ' of cinesemiotics, as it has been implicitly in the development of thinking about cinema from its earliest days in which language has always represented a Super-Ego to be resisted (the cinema will guard its purity, its self-identity, by refusing language, that dangerous supplement) and placated (the cinema must be developed as language, as ' *caméra-stylo* ', for example). This reference to the history of cinema is not without relevance at this point, for it focuses, in the context of the *langue/parole* model, an immediate opposition between language and cinema: where language is always already *langue*, that is complex systematic reality, cinema would seem to *develop* a complexity. There is a history of the cinema in which can be grasped not a series of structural transformations, but rather the evolution, in fact, the creation of a language, using that last term in its widest sense of a mode of communication of meaning. This is a history that is well enough known: two of its crucial points would be the passage from Lumière and Méliès to Griffith and the attempt in the early Russian cinema to elaborate precisely a cinema language. The first point there is crucial for Christian Metz as a demonstration both that cinema lacks a *langue* and that the development of cinema as language depends above all on the realisation of the specific potential of cinema as *narrative* form (the passage from Lumière and Méliès to Griffith being precisely the development of the narrative possibilities of cinema). This demonstration then allows the location of the area of description of cinesemiotics as, exactly, the narrativity of film: ' it is in one and the same movement that the cinema became narrative and that it conquered some of the attributes of a language . . . so-called filmic processes are in fact filmico-narrative '.[14] Metz worked out this position in the 1964 essay ' Le Cinéma, Langue ou Langage? ' mentioned above, the conclusion of which may be summarised succinctly as the view that cinema is a language without

langue.[15] The reasons leading Metz to this conclusion are threefold: defining a *langue* as ' a *system* of *signs* intended for *inter-communication* ',[16] he refuses the cinema this status: (a) because it is a one way communication (the audience has no channel of communication); (b) because it is only partly a system; (c) because it lacks signs.[17] The last two reasons need to be examined in detail below under sections II and III. The first reason leads Metz to define cinema in terms of expression as opposed to communication, thus heavily supporting and sustaining his fundamental conception of cinema as ' direct ' *parole*. The *parole*-expressivity foundation of Metz's cinesemiotics will need to be considered more closely later on, but for the moment it is enough simply to recall the possibility of resisting this emphasis by thinking cinema as *writing* (Eisenstein, Godard).

There is nothing necessarily paradoxical in the definition of cinema as language without *langue* and the recourse none the less to linguistic models. Discussing the *langue/parole* model in his *Elements of Semiology* Barthes can describe, for example, Fashion (' le vêtement écrit ') as a *langue* without *parole*, a state as impossible in the Saussurian context of the study of natural language as *parole* without *langue*.[18] What is in question here is precisely the *development* of semiotics or semiology, that science of signs proposed by Saussure and recognised by him in the very moment of that proposition as transcending, and even modifying, linguistics, despite the fact that linguistics might be posited as furnishing the master-pattern of the future science of signs.[19] The return to the models of linguistics is operational for semiotics, a matter of testing and modifying not of hypostasising. It can always be justified at least ' negatively ' in the semiotic enterprise in terms of describing the *difference* between two signifying practices, one of the general tasks of semiotics being exactly the foundation of a typology of such practices.

The refusal of cinema as *langue* does not entail for Metz the refusal of a cinesemiotics, nor need it here in this reading of Metz that may indeed suggest a certain point of hypostatisation in his use of the *langue/parole* model. There is, in fact, at this stage of research a need to avoid a certain terrorism of language in the examination of other languages (signifying systems) which leads to the identification of *langue* and *code*, to the reduction of *code* to some strict resemblance to the *langue* constituted by linguistics (Metz, it will be seen, holds cinema firmly against the definition by linguistics of the ' double articulation ' of *langue*, finds it lacking and so refuses it any systematic reality, abandoning it to the perpetual neologisms of a *parole* without *langue*). This confusion of *langue* and *code* involves one simultaneously in a rigid structuralism unable to cope with notions of structuration and the totality of the object studied and its interrelations with other signifying practices. The point of development for a cinesemiotics today, indeed,

now seems to be established as the examination of the *multiplicity* of *codes* at work in the cinetext both in their diversity and in their combination. It is from this point that problems of the *specificity* of cinema are to be posed, not from an initial rigid application in strict linguistic terms of the Saussurian *langue/parole* model.[20]

II

Signs: A *langue* is defined by Saussure as a system of signs, a sign being the union of *signifiant* ('sound-image') and *signifié* ('concept'). He further stresses the *arbitrary* nature of the linguistic sign. Despite the fact that it may well be felt by the speaking subjects of a particular linguistic community to be natural, there is no motivated relation (eg a relation of resemblance or analogy) between the linguistic sign and its referent nor, 'within' the sign, between the sound-image and the concept. What is crucial, the area of the fabrication of sense, of sign-ification, is the system of relations and differences in which the individual signs are realised. Saussure is insisting on the systematic reality of *langue:* the two elements of the linguistic sign find their reality not in themselves via some direct analogical relation to 'reality', but in their relations in a system, that is, *structually;* '*in langue there are only differences* . . . Whether we take the *signified* or the *signifier, langue* has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system. The idea or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other signs that surround it'.[21] Work done in the development of the teaching of the *Cours de Linguistique Générale* has proposed the concept of the 'double articulation' of *langue:* the second articulation comprises those distinctive units – the phonemes or pertinent sounds defined diacritically in a system of differences – which have no function other than to combine to form the signifying units of the first articulation – the monemes or minimum units of meaning. It is this double articulation that provides the 'economy' of *langue:* many thousands of units of the first articulation can be formed by the combinatory permutation of the small number of units of the second articulation.[22] Language is thus grasped in terms of a set of interrelated systems of relations of which the various levels of linguistic description take account, as, for example, in the descriptions operated by phonology, grammar, semantics. (Remember that Chomsky's competence/performance model challenges in respect of linguistics 'such methodological conditions as the principle of separation of levels, the attempt to define grammatical relations in terms of co-occurence, and, in general . . . the emphasis on elementary procedures of segmentation and classification' since 'it seems that no inventory (not even that of phonemes) can be determined without reference to the principles by which sentences are constructed in the language'[23]).

This is the context of the problematic of Metz's cinesemiotics. The linguistic sign is arbitrary, thus systematic, but in cinema signification (the process of the production of signs) is described by Metz as always more or less motivated, that is non-arbitrary. It is what Metz calls the *pure analogy* of the image that determines the absence of signs in cinema: the image of a dog resembles a dog, the distance between *signifiant* and *signifié* is minimum; Metz talks of the 'quasi fusion' of the two.[24] The image *duplicates* reality: 'the cinema has as its primary material a body of fragments of the real world, mediated through their mechanical duplication'.[25]

Evidently the fact of a difference between linguistic sign and image is not in doubt,[26] but from the point of view of the development of a cinesemiotics two things need to be stressed. The first concerns the status of the image, defined by Metz as one of 'duplication', of 'pure analogy'. Metz, of course, always adds the qualification that the image is not reality, that it is mediation (and thus what Metz calls 'deformation'[27]), but, as so often in this kind of discussion, the qualification tends to be lost sight of, and the 'impression of reality' seized unreflexively without any attempt to think the process of its production. This occultation of the work of film has a whole history in the development of thinking cinema to some crucial moments of which there will be occasion to return later in this essay. What needs to be said here is that it represents, adapting a term from Husserl, the *natural attitude* to cinema. In the context of a cinesemiotics it can only lead to the denial of cinema as semiotic system: cinema becomes not process of the articulation of meaning, but direct duplication of some Reality; it represents 'reality' with 'reality'. Certain ideas of Pasolini will perhaps have been recognised at this point, and the following passage gives the context of that recognition:

> By studying the cinema as a system of signs, I came to the conclusion that it is a non-conventional and non-symbolic language (*linguaggio*) unlike the written or spoken language (*lingua*), and expresses reality not through symbols but via reality itself; if I want to express that tree I express it through itself. The cinema is a language (*linguaggio*) which expresses reality with reality. So the question is: what is the difference between the cinema and reality? Practically none. I realised that the cinema is a system of signs whose semiology corresponds to a possible semiology of the system of signs of reality itself. So the cinema forced me to remain always at the level of reality, right inside reality: when I make a film I am always in reality, among the trees and among people . . . there is no symbolic or conventional filter between me and reality, as there is in literature. So in practice the cinema was an explosion of my love for reality.[28]

As so often in Metz, the image functions there as the aporie of a cinesemiotics, but where Metz then establishes the possibility of such a semiotics at a level beyond that of the image, the level of narrative, Pasolini collapses the problem in a 'natural semiotics' in which nothing speaks but Reality in a voice from within undistorted by any form of human mediation. Leaving aside the confusion in the passage between the existential experience of the individual making a film and the film as cinetext, as well as this notion of direct unmediated relationship between individual and some force referred to as 'reality', to say that 'if I want to express that tree I express it through itself' is to return to a notion of expression and communication satirised by Swift in Book III of *Gulliver's Travels* in his description of the invention in the Academy of Lagado of a practical language in which things would be expressed, precisely, by themselves, and to refuse thereby all idea of specific activity of cinema ('what is the difference between cinema and reality? Practically none'). Semiotics, in fact, is exactly the mode of the refusal of some fixed and stable, immediately meaningful ('the system of signs of *reality itself*') Reality for the comprehension of 'reality' as *Gedankenkonkretum*, production of series of modes of articulation, in Sollers's words, 'process of generation that transforms'.[29] 'Reality' is a *social* production, society being, in Marx's words, 'the naturalism of man and the humanism of nature both brought to fulfilment'.[30] Against the false hypostatisation of 'reality' in Pasolini, should be set Godard's insistence that 'we are condemned to an analysis of the real'.[31] The *realism* of cinema, as that of the novel, is to be understood not in terms of some immediate mirroring of some Reality (though its definition in these terms may be a major ideological strategy), but in relation to the representation of 'reality' a particular society proposes and assumes, to what Althusser has described in a lecture as that 'complex formation of *montages* of notions – representations – images on the one hand, and of *montages* of modes of behaviour and conduct-attitudes-gestures on the other. The whole functions as practical norms which govern the attitude and the concrete stance of men with regard to the real objects and real problems of their social and individual existence, and of their history'.[32] In Eisenstein's words, 'Absolute realism is by no means the correct form of perception. It is simply the function of a certain form of social structure'.[33] Thus it is possible to postulate two types of 'realism'; that which *repeats* without question the existing forms of the social representation of 'reality' and which from within the particular society will be received as direct, absolute realism, its forms having been naturalised as Reality, and that which defines itself reflexively as exactly a *practice* of cinema, that formulates its aim in terms of an analysis of the forms of 'reality' including analysis of the means of production of its analysis, questioning the specific work of cinema. It is also

possible to postulate that the break between these two types of realism is *not* that between so-called popular films and so-called art films, these latter being in large majority complicit in the occultation of their practice as cinema, but between the large mass of films and certain crucial texts that it is more and more urgent at the present time to distinguish clearly in their difference. (This task is slowly being undertaken, notably in the work of the review *Cinéthique*).

Returning in this context to the problem of the image, there are one or two things that need to be noted. Firstly, there is a work to be done of distinguishing the scientific limitations of the camera from its ideological limitations. (The problem needs to be posed at least initially in these terms). The development of the camera needs to be recognised, that is, in conjunction with the reconstitution of a certain familiar monocular perspective developed in the Renaissance.[34] It is not one of the least important achievements of underground cinema that it has attempted to break through, even if confusedly, the particular ideological overdetermination of the camera. Secondly, there is a work to be done of considering the terms of the *notion* of analogy in relation to the image which must not be exempted from reflection in some realm of the natural. The main development of such a consideration has been in the work of the Italian semiotician Umberto Eco, as set out in the first four chapters of Section B of his *La Struttura Assente*.[35] Eco's stress is on the processes of conventionalisation and codification underlying the ' natural ' fact of the image; so much so, that he in fact determines ten codes potentially operative in the communication of the image: codes of perception, codes of recognition, codes of transmission, tonal codes, iconic codes, iconographic codes, codes of taste and sensibility, rhetorical codes, stylistic codes, codes of the unconscious.[36] It is impossible here to examine each of these proposed codes in detail and the list is given as indication of the degree of codification that can be postulated at work in the ' duplication ' of the image. What will be retained here from Eco's account is his description of the cinematographic image in terms of a *triple* articulation: (first articulation) a series of *iconic figures* combining to form (second articulation) *iconic signs* combining to form (third articulation) *semes* which then combine diachronically, as the frame of the film, to produce the new element of movement.[37] If we take as example the image used as example by Eco himself of a schoolmaster talking to his pupils in a classroom, we have the set of *figures* – ' angles ', ' dark-light ' ' foreground-background ', etc; the recognition in the combination of these *figures* of a set of *iconic signs* – ' human nose ', ' eye ', etc; the recognition in the combination of these *iconic signs* of a complex iconic enunciation (' un enunciatio iconico complesso ') – of the type, ' this is a schoolmaster standing talking to his pupils '; the recognition in the combination of these *semes* of a further level of gesture and

movement and finally of narrative. The immediate interest, in the context of the present discussion, of Eco's description is that while, as we shall see, it rejoins certain positions of Metz's research – the image is not a *moneme* but an enunciation (Eco's *seme*) – it also suggests in its attempt to locate three articulations at the level of the image the possibility, in its flexibility and its refusal to confound *code* and *langue*, of, as it were, the dynamisation of Metz's cinesemiotics which, continuing in the direct application of the *langue/parole* model, ends in the impasse of noting the absence of the ' double articulation ' of *langue* in cinema.[38]

Secondly, there has always been an obvious temptation in thinking cinema in relation to linguistic models of identifying the individual images of a film as words, and the sequence of images as a sentence. It is this parallel that Metz is concerned to reject, in conjunction with his refusal of any cinematic parallel to linguistic signs; a concern the level of which is always the image, and which leads him to the necessity for the negative definition of cinema as without ' double articulation '. The terms of this definition are simple. Cinema lacks the second articulation because, the analogical image being a quasi fusion of *signifiant* and *signifié*, the distance between *signifiant* and *signifié* that allows the combination of phonemes into monemes has no existence in film. (It is against this that the change of perspective opened by Eco's work on codification in the image is so precious[39]). Furthermore, cinema lacks the first articulation because the image cannot be assimilated to the linguistic moneme. The image is not a moneme but an utterance (series of utterances); even the simple close-up image of a pistol offers (at least) the utterance ' here is a revolver '. The connections from this negative definition to the identification of cinema as *parole* without *langue* are easily made: linguistic utterances are ' creative ' combinations of words, fixed virtualities of *langue*, by the individual language user, but in cinema ' the word, unity of *langue*, is missing ',[40] there is no lexicon of images which lack any paradigmatic value, being always, as it were, unique individual utterances – ' Thus the image is always *parole*, never unity of *langue* '.[41] The linguistic parallel of the image is not the word, but the utterance; that of the sequence of images is not the sentence, but a complex segment of discourse.

There is need for hesitation in connection with this account, a hesitation that crystalises round two main points, the first of which is again the question of levels of description. Metz blocks (via the notion of analogy) the analysis at the image, Eco, changing the perspective so that the image becomes the macro-term of the analysis,[42] can describe the image in three articulations. Changing the perspective again, in a different way, the image can be thought as minimum unit in terms of basic material of film, the work of which begins at the level of the combination of these minimum units; this can be thought simply, as the combination of

images diachronically to achieve movement, and complexly, in terms of montage, area of the narrativity at the level of which Metz locates his cinesemiotics, area of the specific work of cinema as signifying practice, crucial as such to the theories of Eisenstein (of course), equally, to take a different kind of example, to Bresson.[43] The second point confirms a general emphasis already made here, that concerning the need for an exploration of cinema as signifying practice in terms of (multiple) processes of codification and not in terms of rigid linguistic models. In this perspective, Eco's close work on the image can be integrated without difficulty in a general cinesemiotics, the task of which would be precisely to interrogate the multiplicity of codes at work in the cinetext. In this perspective again, it is possible to postulate the development of a series of codes, of processes of cinecodification, in the history of cinema that now participate in the sign-ification of the cinetext. This is a postulate to which we will have to return later.

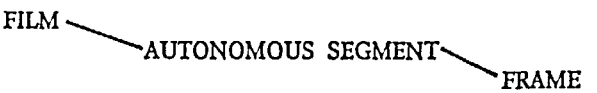
III

Paradigmatic and Syntagmatic Relations: In its emphasis on the reality of *langue* as system of differences, Saussurian linguistics defines the validity of individual linguistic units as dependent on their systematic relations with other units. At all levels of linguistic description units sustain *paradigmatic* and *syntagmatic* relations, relating 'vertically', as it were, with the units that could also occur in the same context (thus in the word *dog*, for example, /d/ is in paradigmatic relation to (c) (*cog*), etc), and 'horizontally', as it were, with the other units with which it is placed in combination (/d/ is in syntagmatic relation to /og/). It can be seen that the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations are, in fact, interdependent. The analysis of the combination of units depends on the definition of those units which depends on the identification of paradigmatic relations. The process of this complex classification is that of commutation: 'The commutation test consists of artificially introducing a change in the plane of expression (*signifiants*) and in observing whether this change brings about a correlative modification on the plane of content (*signifiés*) . . . if the commutation of two *signifiants* produces a commutation of the *signifiés* one is assured of having got hold of a syntagmatic unit . . . The commutation test allows us in principle to spot, by degrees, the significant units which together weave the sytagm, thus preparing the classification of those units into paradigms'.[44]

It was seen that one of the main reasons for Metz's definition of cinema as a language without *langue* was his conception of cinema as non-systematic. The (interdependent) pivots of this conception are the cinema's lack of signs and what Metz refers to as the paradigmatic 'poverty' of cinema.[45] Once again, it is the image which is the determining factor in this identification of paradigmatic poverty in so far as the image is defined not as sign

(the validity of which would necessarily be systematic) but as pure analogy (the validity of which is duplication). Every image is particular and individual; thus there is no commutation, merely an infinite set of possibilities: 'in the cinema . . . the number of realisable images is indefinite. Indefinite many times over . . . For profilmic scenes are in themselves unlimited in number . . .'[46] Every image is a neologism.

In the context of this identification of paradigmatic poverty Metz is led to define his cinesemiotics in terms of the study of syntagmatic relations and it is in these terms that the major part of his work has been conceived, above all his long analysis of what he calls the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' of cinema. This analysis coincides with Metz's location of the area of cinesemiotics as the study of the narrativity of cinema, for its aim is the elucidation of the system of organisation at the level of the sequence of the spatio-temporal logic of narrative. It is thus an anlysis of the film ('maximum syntagm') into the possible set of narrative 'figures' or 'autonomous segments'.[47] This analysis will be the first level of decomposition or segmentation of the film: the *autonomous segment*, as its name suggests, is a part of the film, not a part of a part of the film. Schematically, this could be represented thus (leaving open the definition of the further levels of segmentation):



Metz's analysis of the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' was elaborated through several exploratory versions before its final formalisation as a model describing eight types of *autonomous segment*. Metz applied the model in an exhaustive description of Jacques Rozier's *Adieu Philippine*, broken down into eighty-three *autonomous segments*.[48] Examples of the types of *autonomous segment* in the discussion that follows will be taken from this description.

The first operative distinction is that between *autonomous segments* made up of more than one *minimum segment* (that is, more than one *shot*) and those made up of only one *minimum segment*. The latter, which Metz calls the *autonomous shot*, provides the first type of *autonomous segment*. This type is realised either as a *sequence-shot*, a whole scene in one shot (eg *autonomous segment* 17 of *Adieu Philippine* showing Michel, the hero, and his friend

Daniel working in the TV studio), or as an *insert*, of which four kinds can be identified: (1) *non-diegetic insert*, an image sustaining no narrative relations and thus generally of some form of metaphorical value (no examples in *Adieu Philippine*, but an obvious example would be the image of the harpists inserted in the Menshevik sequence in *October;* (2) *subjective insert*, an image intended by a character as absence – memories, dreams, premonitions, and so on (again no examples in *Adieu Philippine*, but obviously commonplace in cinema); (3) *displaced diegetic insert*, an image inserted ' *en enclave* ', as, for instance, in the middle of a sequence bearing on the pursuers, a single image of the pursued (*autonomous segment* 23 of *Adieu Philippine*, a single image of the two girls in a telephone booth wedged into a scene showing Michel in the TV studio telephoning them). It will be seen later that this kind of *insert* is very difficult to distinguish from the *alternating syntagm;*[49] (4) *explanatory insert*, an image giving a detail in close-up (no examples in *Adieu Philippine*, but think of the common device of giving a close-up of a letter received by a character in order that it may be read by the audience).

The second distinction operates between achronological and chronological syntagms. In achronological sytagms no temporal *signifié* is assured by the passage of the various shots. Metz recognises two types of achronological syntagm: (1) *Parallel syntagm* (= the second type of *autonomous segment*), the montage of two or more motifs without specification of spatial or temporal relationship (no examples in *Adieu Philippine*, but think, for instance of the alternation of shots of a stormy sea and shots of a peaceful cornfield) – evidently this type has a heavily symbolical value. (2) *Bracketing syntagm*[50] (= the third type of *autonomous segment*), a series of brief shots representing events and situations offered by the film as typical samples of a particular area of reality without any specification as to their temporal interrelation, (*autonomous segment* of *Adieu Philippine*, a series of shots of various things going on in a TV studio, *signifiants* assuring the *signifié* ' working in television ').

The third operative distinction is between chronological syntagms the *signifié* of which is temporal simultaneity and those of which it is some form of temporal sequentiality, that is narrative syntagms. There is one type of the former, which is thus the fourth type of *autonomous segment*, the *descriptive syntagm*, a segment in which the succession of shots offers a relation of spatial coexistence (*autonomous segment* 71 of *Adieu Philippine* dealing with Michel and the girls on the boat going out to the island; images of boat, sea, sky, yachts, girls at the helm, offer a description of the sea as a kind of suspended point of time in the action).

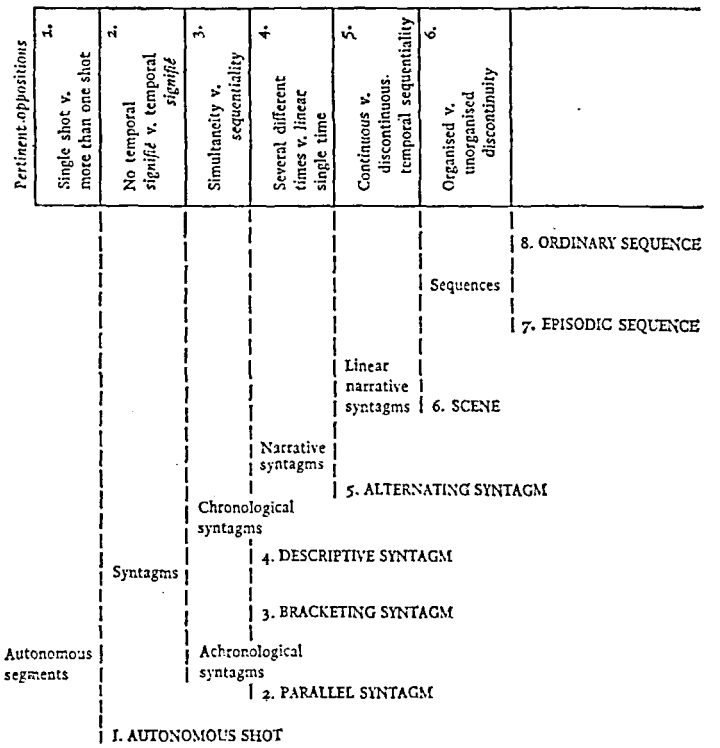
The fourth distinction permits the separation of narrative syntagms depending on the alternation of several different times from those depending on a single linear time sequence. There is one type

which depends on alternation, the *alternating syntagm* that thus provides the fifth type of *autonomous segment*. In the *alternating syntagm* the montage presents in alternation two or more series of events, each series offering a temporal sequence but the series together offering a simultaneity – the cliché example would be the alternation of images of pursuers with images of pursued (*autonomous segment* 72 of *Adieu Philippine*, Pachala making his film, Michel and the girls approaching in the boat, Pachala making his film, Michel and the girls arriving on the island where Pachala is making the film).

The fifth distinction allows the operation of a separation within linear narrative syntagms of those the temporal sequentiality of which is continuous from those in which it is discontinuous or elliptical. The former provides the sixth kind of *autonomous segment*, the *scene*, a series of images offered as spatio-temporally continuous (*autonomous segment* 50 of *Adieu Philippine*, Juliette, Liliane, Michel and Daniel walking on the beach talking together).

The sixth operative distinction is between those discontinuous linear narrative syntagms in which the discontinuity is organised and is the very principle of the intelligibility of the segment and those in which the discontinuity rests, as it were, unorganised. There is one type corresponding to each of these alternatives. The former gives the *episodic sequence* (the seventh type of *autonomous segment*), in which a certain number of separate events are presented in chronological order (*autonomous segment* 5 of *Adieu Philippine*, Michel is shown meeting the girls at the station, the three are shown walking in the country, the three are shown at an airfield watching the planes; the three episodes function as a unity to assure the account of 'A Sunday outing of Michel and the girls'). The latter gives the eighth and final type of *autonomous segment*, the *ordinary sequence*, the common form of sequence in which the discontinuity is simply the omission of those moments judged unimportant (*autonomous segment* 80 of *Adieu Philippine*, Michel, who has just received his call-up papers is shown going from a café to a travel agency to buy a boat ticket).

It will probably become apparent in the course of this explication of Metz's model of the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' (which is resumed diagrammatically as opposite), and in the light of the initial discussion of the interdependence of paradigmatic and sytagmatic relations, that what the model represents, in an extremely economical fashion, is the establishment of a paradigm of units of film at the level of narrative construction. Of necessity, Metz proceeds to identify the types of *autonomous segment* by commutation, establishing a series of pertinent oppositions (the operative distinctions described above). As the interdependence of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations in linguistics suggests, a cinesemiotics defining its object in terms of a syntagmatic cannot but constitute a paradigmatic. Cinema is thus found to have at least a certain para-


Pertinent oppositions
1. Single shot v. more than one shot
2. No temporal signifié v. temporal signifié
3. Simultaneity v. sequentiality
4. Several different times v. linear single time
5. Continuous v. discontinuous. temporal sequentiality
6. Organised v. unorganised discontinuity
8. ORDINARY SEQUENCE
Sequences
7. EPISODIC SEQUENCE
Linear narrative syntagms
6. SCENE
Narrative syntagms
5. ALTERNATING SYNTAGM
Chronological syntagms
4. DESCRIPTIVE SYNTAGM
Syntagms
3. BRACKETING SYNTAGM
Autonomous segments
Achronological syntagms
2. PARALLEL SYNTAGM
1. AUTONOMOUS SHOT

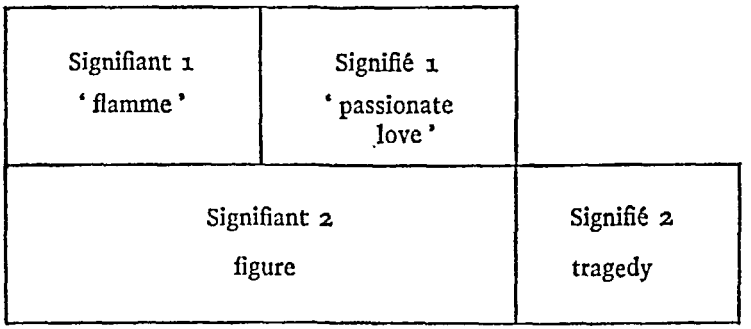
digmatic richness and indeed Metz now confesses himself 'less sceptical' in this respect.[51]

It is important that this weakening of scepticism should not underwrite the aporie of the confusion of *code* and *langue*. Metz demonstrates the possibility of this underwriting in the way in which he hesitates with regard to the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' between talking of a *grammar* and talking of a *rhetoric*.[52] The task of a cinesemiotics must be the description and analysis of the codes at work in the sign-ification of the cinetext, of which the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' can be seen to be one. The stress on codes opens us again to the fact that cinema may be thought in terms (amongst others) of the development of processes of codification, including, contrary to Metz's conception, at the level of the image. This is clear enough with the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' that could well be described in a historical development, in its elaboration, within a general series of cultural forms, as rhetoric.[53] What Metz describes in the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' is above all an *écriture* in the sense in which that term is used by Roland Barthes,[54] a set of accepted social conventions of articulating reality, even if that *écriture* is, in the 'realism' of the cinema, *naturalised*, absent as writing, received as Reality. Faced with a *text*, a film that refuses that ('natural') *écriture* and that works precisely on its formation, Metz's model becomes im-pertinent, as he himself recognises in his acknowledgement that a sequence of Godard's *Pierrot le Fou* lies outside its descriptive possibilities. In fact, the premises of Metz's set of pertinent oppositions are interdependent finally with those of that first kind of realism mentioned above: an acceptance of the forms of a particular social *vraisemblable*.[55]

IV

Denotation/Connotation: The Danish linguist Hjelmslev defined a class of signifying systems that he referred to as connotative semiotics, the basis of which was their dependence for expression on an initial constituted system, on an initial semiotic. The first system constitutes the plane of denotation, the second, that which is 'built on' the first, that of connotation.[56] Thus, for example, the word *flamme* used in French classical tragedy has at once a denotative meaning ('love') and a connotative meaning (it signifies the rhetoric of tragedy). Thus, to take a further example, this time given by Metz from cinema,[57] in a certain genre of American films an image of the docks at once denotes a dockyard scene and has the connotative significance of a kind of anguish and hardness. The relationship of the two planes can be expressed schematically as opposite.

For Metz a cinesemiotics necessarily faces a *choice* of object: 'The semiology of the cinema may be conceived either as a semiology of connotation or as a semiology of denotation'.[58] Metz's cinesemiotics chooses the latter. The logic of this definition of a



cinesemiotic choice and of the option taken by Metz will be clear in the light of those principal themes of Metz's work already discussed. On the basis of the description of the analogical ' literality ' of the image, Metz's cinesemiotics locates its object as the study of the narrative denotation of cinema, the initial plane over which lies the layer of connotations which Metz leaves to one side in order to focus on what to him, cinema being defined in terms of narrativity, is specific to cinema: ' It is also, it is even *first of all* by its methods of denotation that cinema is a specific language '.[59] What there might be of a *langue* (according to the strict application of the Saussurian model) in cinema must be found here. Hence Metz, while defining the ' *Grande Syntagmatique* ' as a rhetoric (code for the utilisation of a *langue*), simultaneously offers it as a grammar (system of a *langue*), – ' these modes of arrangement organise not only filmic *connotation*, but also and *first of all* its denotation '.[60]

In this context it may simply be noted that (in cinema and literature at least) the use of the model of connotation supposes a rhetoric, that is a formalisation based on a conception ' norm/ deviation ', the definition of a level of literality and the analysis of the possibilities of the organisation of that level for some purpose beyond the simple communication of the denotative message – emotive, aesthetic, ideological. The *value* of a particular work will thus depend on the richness of its connotations, not on its denotative performance which is merely a general accomplishment. It is likely that the development of this kind of denotation-connotation model could serve in the description of the *classic* cinetext, for which will henceforth be reserved the term *film*. The process of its development may lead to the distinction of certain films that are only with difficulty describable within its terms and which would mark, therefore, its limits.[61] These limits would be those of an *écriture* which it is crucial to think in its formation, which it is crucial, finally, to refuse in its *naturalisation* via the conception of the denotation of image and narrative; we need, that

 is, to break open the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' by thinking its production within the general intelligibility, the totality of signifying practices within which cinema is contained and by which it is inscribed, and by thinking too the *difference* of cinema, by thinking the specificity of its practice.

* * *

The object of a cinesemiotics may be proposed as the *cinetext*, grasped as assemblage of signifying practices to be studied in their functioning and disposition within its space. The aim of such a study would be the description of the *structuration* of the cinetext, of its production of meanings, through its decipherment in the analysis of a series of codes. At work in the structuration of the cinetext is an overdetermination of codes which found its intelligibility.

Metz, in the recent recasting of his work, has begun to approach the cinetext in these terms. A note added in 1968 to an earlier article postulates five major levels of codification,[62] which may be listed with some amplification and change of emphasis as follows: (1) The level of perception itself (and here we can refer to the work accomplished by Umberto Eco as outlined above); (2) The level of the identification of the visual and aural 'facts' proposed by the cinetext: that is, of the capacity to *read* the material it offers; (3) The level of the series of various connotative systems utilised by the cinetext (a banal example; David Hemmings's car in Antonioni's *Blow-up* is to be read at once as 'a car' and as *signifiant* of a certain life-style: the series of these various *signifiants*, car, interior decoration of studio, breathless waiting girls, and so on, fix the *signifié* '" trendy " young London photographer' after a general convention endlessly utilised and sustained by press, television, cinema, etc, and forming part of the general *vraisemblable*); (4) The level of the narrative disposition of the cinetext, taking narrative here in the sense of the *logic* of its disposition. The term 'disposition' is used here in extension from classical rhetoric ('dispositio') to indicate the connection of cinema here with all those forms of the mediation of a certain representation of reality; (5) The level of the series of filmic codes organising the various levels of the cinetext. If the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' would be included here (as for Metz it would), it would have to be in thinking its interdependence with the kind of *vraisemblance*. Like other codes, these codes may become the object of the activity of the cinetext (Eisenstein's *Old and New* dramatising the chase sequence of the stock Western, Pasolini's *Uccellacci e Uccellini* in its reference to a certain situation of Italian cinema, etc).

It is here that may be posed the problem of the *specificity* of the cinetext, a problem the terms of which are currently being worked out in a debate between Metz and Emilio Garroni. It may

 cerned to stress the various modulations of this – camera regulated to reproduce the perspective code naturalised in the Renaissance, colour, sequence-shot, montage dependent on the spatio-temporal narrative logic of a *vraisemblable*, etc.

* * *

It is important here to return to that idea of a *practice of cinema* developed at the beginning of the present essay and operate a distinction between the cinetext *film* and the cinetext *text;* between reproduction, reflection, representation and production, dramatisation, writing. The text offers a reading of formations of meaning in a practice that is not absented in its fixation in the face of some 'Truth' or 'Reality' but presented in its insertion in a network of significations in which it realises its inscription. The plurality of the text is exactly a subversion of the notion of organic development, of the homogeneous 'work'.

The break text/film is not to be understood in terms of some accepted distinction of the type 'art film'/'popular film'. In effect, there exist alongside the simple taking for granted of film, two types of reference to the idea of language in general cinema theory which lead to two conceptions that I shall distinguish as those of a 'cinema of speech', mode of natural expression, and of a 'cinema of writing', activity of scription, production, transformation, analysis. Jacques Derrida has fully demonstrated to what extent the concept of the natural authentic expressivity of speech (as opposed to the artificial parasitic travesty of writing) has been fundamental in Western thinking in its constant attempt to locate some full original presence before the difference of articulation.[67] The reference to language behind the 'cinema of speech' is a reference to language as instrument of the natural expression of some absolute subject, of the individual, Reality, or whatever, a reference in which the processes of the production of meanings, of the articulation of individual, Reality, or whatever, are occulted. In cinema theory it is only necessary to think here of the ideas of André Bazin or Alexandre Astruc. If the latter can talk of the 'caméra-stylo' it is in terms of an image of writing as transparent medium, of a 'phonetic writing' as, supposedly, direct expression of the voice of author and Reality. Montage, inscription of cinematoghapic practice, must be rejected in order to accede to the natural voice of Reality that will express itself in an absolute unmediated authenticity. So too for Bazin, with his whole mythology of composition in depth and the sequence-shot, montage is to be rejected as fragmentation of the plenitude of the full presence of Reality that must be allowed to reveal itself. As Roberto Rossellini put it in a famous phrase, 'Things are there, why manipulate them?'[68] This is to come back to Pasolini and the poetic spirituality of reality which must be allowed to *speak* ('who talks through a tree?

God, or reality itself . . . the tree as a sign puts us in communication with a mysterious speaker'[69]): thus, 'what is the difference between the cinema and reality? Practically none'. The ideal of cinema is the absence of cinema. Bazin concludes a review of *Bicycle Thieves*, judged to be 'pure cinema', with the triumphant '*plus de cinéma*'.[70] No more cinema indeed, only Reality itself 'without anything insipid and conventional and symbolic',[71] merely, that is, to borrow an expression from Godard, '*l'idéologie du vécu*', the naive repetition of the (naturalised) forms of a particular representation of 'the real', a total lack of consciousness.

To this cinema of the realism of expressivity may be opposed the cinema of the materiality of inscription (Eisenstein, 'I am not a realist, but a materialist'), a 'cinema of writing'. As far as the history of general cinema theory is concerned, the necessary reference here is to those crucial essays written by Eisenstein round about 1929 in which he uses notions of ideogrammatic production of meaning against notions of phonetic expressivity and representation: 'The film frame can never be an inflexible *letter of the alphabet*, but must always remain a multiple-meaning *ideogram*. And it can be read only in juxtaposition, just as an ideogram acquires its specific *significance, meaning*, and even *pronunciation* (occasionally in diametric opposition to one another) only when combined with a separately indicated reading or tiny meaning – an indicator for the exact meaning – placed alongside the basic hieroglyph.'[72] The development of this idea of the cinetext as dynamic process of production of meanings links to the stress on the plurality of the cinetext developed in such notions as 'polyphonic montage'[73] and 'monistic ensemble'.[74] The cinetexts realised by Eisenstein at the end of the twenties (*October*, 1927: *Old and New*, 1929) demonstrate clearly enough the terms of a reflection on the work of cinema; as such, they may now be recognised not as films, but, exactly, as texts.

It is today that the reality of this break between film and text is beginning, hesitantly, to be felt as radical experience of cinema; whether naively, as in much of underground cinema, in a flurry of activity that occasionally marks a real advance (Rice's *Chumlum*), neuralgically, without any real basis in a conscious theoretical practice (Varda's *Lions' Love*), in a complex reading of ideological formations, including cinematographic ones, in an activity of deconstruction reduction of cinema (*Le Gai Savoir*, inscribed explicitly and precisely in a space that includes, for example, Derrida and Sollers), or, finally, in one or two scattered attempts at a materialist 'cinema of writing' (*Méditerrannée* by Jean-Daniel Pollet and Philippe Sollers[75]). In all these varieties of this experience, to a greater or lesser extent, the film is presented in these texts in its deconstruction: the spectator is no longer placed in the position of the consumption of a representation, but in that of an experience

of reading. 'No more cinema', said Bazin. Yes indeed, no more cinema. Not, however, in the sense of the occultation of the work of cinema in its confusion with Reality. The end, on the contrary, of *that* cinema, of that 'innocence' (Astruc, 'And so, in contrast to the authors of the *nouveau roman*, I have always maintained towards the art I practice a feeling of confidence and innocence '[76]). The last word is thus Godard's; 'I await the end of cinema with optimism '.[77]

Notes

1. Rudolf Arnheim, *Film as Art* (Faber paper covered edition), London 1969 pp 5, 14.
2. Henry James, 'The Art of Fiction'; *The House of Fiction*, ed L. Edel (Mercury Books), London 1962, p 23.
3. Henry James, 'The Future of the Novel'; *Ibid* p 53.
4. *Cahiers du Cinéma* No 172 (November 1965), p 20. The last year or so has seen a conscious activity of reflection undertaken by the *Cahiers* which has given rise to an extremely important debate with the review *Cinéthique* (see *Screen* v 12 n 1 and 2, 1971).
5. It may perhaps be mentioned here that the break represented by this *practice of cinema* is also to be read in literature in the development of a *practice of writing*, radical experience of language worked through in the *text* as dramatisation of the forms of the intelligibility of the real. For discussion of this break in literature and for a wider situation of semiotics the reader is referred to my *The Nouveau Roman: A Study in the Practice of Writing*, London 1972, Ch V.
6. Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, London 1969, Ch III pp 116-155. Wollen's work is seminal for any one writing in English on cinesemiotics. A certain ignorance in Britain created for his book a context of necessity and the book has become our context. Mention should also be made here for the British reader of a crucial general account of 'The Semiotic Activity' by Julia Kristeva; in *Signs of the Times: Introductory Readings in Textual Semiotics*, Cambridge 1971 and reprinted in this issue.
7. Christian Metz, *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma, Paris* 1968 (here after referred to as *ESC*). The present essay is no more than a simple introduction through the work of Metz to some approaches and problems.
8. Roland Barthes *Elements of Semiology* (English translation) London 1967. (References to this work are to sections, not pages.)
9. *ESC* pp 39-93.
10. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (English translation), Ed Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, McGraw-Hill 1966, p 13.
11. *Elements of Semiology* 1.1.4.
12. John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*, Cambridge 1969, p 44.
13. Noam Chomsky, *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory;* in, *The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, ed J. A. Fodor & J. J. Katz, New Jersey 1964, p 59.
14. *ESC* p 99.
15. *ESC* p 51 ('un langage sans langue').
16. *ESC* p 79.
17. ESC p 79.
18. *Elements of Semiology* 1.2.2.

19. *Course in General Linguistics* pp 16, 67 ff.
20. Metz's own work is now developing in this direction, as witness the emphases of some of the footnotes added to early essays in *ESC,* not to mention those of various more recent articles and interviews. There is a clear statement of the recasting of his work in his 'Au-delà de l'analogie, l'image'; *Communications* No 15, p 3 (reprinted in *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma,* Vol II, Paris 1972).
21. *Course in General Linguistics,* p 120.
22. Cf.A. Martinet, *Eléments de Linguistique Générale* (Collection U2), Paris 1967, pp 13-18.
23. *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory* pp 113, 60.
24. *ESC* p 51.
25. Christian Metz, 'Problèmes actuels de théorie du cinéma'; reprinted in *Essais* Vol II, 1972, and translated in this issue.
26. cf the discussion of this problem in a Peircean context by Wollen in his *Signs and Meanings in the Cinema* pp 116-155. It would be superflous to repeat that discussion in those terms here.
27. *ESC* p 111.
28. *Pasolini on Pasolini* ed Oswald Stack, London, 1969, p 29 (*Italian linguaggio* and *lingua* here correspond to French *langage* and *langue*).
29. Philippe Sollers, 'Le Réflexe de Réduction'; in, *Théorie d'Ensemble,* Paris, 1968, p 393.
30. *Marx-Engels Gesamtausgabe* 1.3. Berlin 1932, p 116.
31. Cit. Richard Roud, *Godard* London 1967, p 46.
32. ENS 1967/1968 Cours I.
33. Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Film Form,* London, 1951, p 35.
34. It is not without interest to note that it is at the very moment that Hegel brings to a close the history of painting, at the moment when painting begins to grow conscious of the fact that the scientific perspective that determines its relations to form is dependent on a specific cultural structure, at that very moment Niepce invents the photograph (Niepce 1765-1833 is contemporary with Hegel 1770-1831), destined to redouble the Hegelian closure, to produce in mechanical fashion the ideology of the perspective code, of its normality and its censures. It is not, in my opinion, until such a phenomenon has been thought, until the determinations of the apparatus (the camera) that structure the reality of its inscription have been thought, that the cinema will be able objectively to consider its relation to ideology. . . . Marcelin Pleynet, 'Le point aveugle'; *Cinéthique* No 6, p 14.
35. Umberto Eco, *La Struttura Assente,* Milan 1968, pp 105-160. (There is an abridged version in English, translated from a paper given by Eco to the 1967 Pesaro Colloquium, under the title 'Articulations of Cinematic Code'; in, *Cinemantics* No. 1, January 1970, pp 8-9. A full French translation has been published under the title 'Sémiologie des Messages Visuels'; in *Communications* No 15, pp 11-51).
36. *La Struttura Assente* pp 145-148.
37. *Ibid* pp 155-158.
38. It should be noted that as a result of Eco's work Metz is now substantially revising his notions of the image as 'pure analogy'; cf 'Au-delà de l'analogie l'image' (see Bibliography).
39. cf 'In an image we must try to discover a method./Yes, we must find the discourse of its method and ours at the same time./And this method, if we find it, will teach us ways of construction' *Le Gai Savior.*
40. *ESC* p 75.

41. *ESC* p 72.
42. '. . . what will be proposed here are some instruments for the analysis of the supposed cinematographic *langue* ('lingua') *as if* the cinema had given us till now only *L'arrivée d'un Train en Gare de la Ciotat* and *L'Arroseur Arrosé; La Struttura Assente,* p 150. (It is perhaps not strictly necessary to recall here that the two films Eco mentions are by Louis Lumière and date from 1895.).
43. 'Cinema expresses itself not by images, but relations between images, which is not at all the same thing'. Robert Bresson; cit. Michel Estève, *Robert Bresson* ('Cinéma d'aujourd'hui' No 8), Paris 1962, p 97. (There is a common equation of image and 'word' in which the latter term is used in a very loose sense verging on that of 'stylistic motif'; 'Just as writers have privileged words, I have privileged word-images which appear in all my films', Agnès Varda, 'Entretien', *Cahiers du Cinéma* No 165 (April 1965), p 50. As far as Varda is concerned here these images would be, for example, those of whiteness (sheets, wallpaper). This is made explicit in *Lions Love* in the stress on the whiteness of Shirley Clarke's dress.)
44. *Elements of Semiology* III 2.3.
45. *ESC* pp 102-103.
46. *ESC* pp 102-103 ('pro-filmic' = 'happening in front of the camera').
47. *ESC* p 125.
48. *ESC* pp 111-181.
49. *ESC* pp 159-160.
50. *Bracketing syntagm* is a poor transformation of Metz's *syntagme en accolade.*
51. *ESC* pp 76n, 104n.
52. *ESC* p 119.
53. Thus cinema can find itself validly taken up within the framework of a General Rhetoric: cf. Le Groupe μ, *Rhétorique Générale,* Paris 1970.
54. Roland Barthes, *La Degré Zéro de l'Ecriture,* Paris 1953 (English translation: *Writing Degree Zero,* Cape, London 1967).
55. Significantly, Metz talks of the '*Grande Syntagmatique*' as that which organises '*the most usual* spatio-temporal logic within the sequence': 'Spécificité des codes et spécificité des langages'; in *Semiotica* I, 1969, p 379 (my italics).
56. L. Hjelmslev, *Prologomena to a Theory of Language,* Madison 1963, pp 114-121.
57. *ESC* p 100.
58. *ESC* p 99.
59. *ESC* p 100.
60. *ESC* p 120.
61. cf Roland Barthes's analysis of Balzac's *Sarrasine, S/Z, Paris* 1970.
62. *ESC* pp 67-68n.
63. Emilio Garroni, 'Teoria del film sonoro e l'eterogeneità del linguaggio cinematografico': *Semiotica ed Estetica,* Bari 1968, pp 47-99.
64. 'Spécificité des codes et spécificité des langages', p 395. Elsewhere Metz has stated 'I believe that there is a cinematographic specificity, which I would define as a group of codes that only appear in the cinema': 'Sémiologie/Linguistique/Cinéma' *Cinéthique* No 6, p 25. The noting of this contradiction (between multiple and unique language specificity) here is not with the purpose of somehow scoring points off Metz, but of indicating the difficulty and the actuality of the problem of specificity: so much work needs to be

done on the figures of montage, the forms of the combination of image and sound and so on.

65. Peter Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema* p 60. (Chapter I of Wollen's book describes the history of this progression in some detail).
66. *ESC* pp 13-24.
67. Jacques Derrida, *De la Grammatologie*, Paris 1967.
68. 'Entretien avec Roberto Rossellini'; *Cahiers du Cinéma* No 94 (April 1959), p 6.
69. *Pasolini on Pasolini.* p 153. cf 'We must attain that extreme point at which things speak for themselves. This does not mean only that they speak on their own, but that they speak of what they really are'. Rossellini: cit M. Verdone, *Roberto Rossellini* ('Cinéma d'auhourd'hui' No 15), Paris, 1963, p 95.
70. André Bazin, *Qu'est-ce-que le Cinéma* Vol IV Paris 1962, p 59.
71. *Pasolini on Pasolini*, p 38.
72. Sergei M. Eisenstein, *Film Form*, pp 65-66.
73. '*polyphonic montage*, where shot is linked to shot not merely through one indication – movement, or light, or stage in the exposition of the plot, or the like – but through a *simultaneous advance* of a multiple series of lines each maintaining an independent compositional course and each contributing to the total compositional course of the sequence.' Sergei M. Eisenstein, *The Film Sense* (Faber paper-covered edition), London 1968, pp 64-65. (Eisenstein's example is taken from *Old and New*).
74. 'The Japanese have shown us another extremely interesting form of ensemble, the *monistic ensemble*. Sound-movement-space-voice here *do not accompany* (nor even parallel) each other, but function as *elements of equal significance*'. *Film Form*, p 20.
75. For discussion of *Méditerranée*, cf 'Cinéma/Inconscient/Sacré/Histoire', Philippe Sollers: *Cinéthique* No 5, pp 33-35 & 'Vers le récit rouge', J. P. Fargier; *Cinéthique* Nos 7-8, pp 9-19.
76. Cit. *Le Monde* 6 November 1970, p 21.
77. *Godard on Godard*, Cinema Two Series, Secker and Warburg, London 1972, p 210.

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Michel Cegarra

This contribution by M Cegarra to Cinéthique *no 7/8, 1970, was published at a time when that magazine was hesitating between two approaches to the cinema: 1 the rejection of the cinema as depiction/representation/expression and the valuation of films in terms of specificity: the fewer the non-cinematically-specific elements in a film, the better (the more ' materialist ') that film would be: and 2 the definition of the cinema as an ideological and economic practice, with the concommitant obligation to analyse and determine the functions of the film discourse, the critical discourse and film-making within the present conjuncture. The magazine finally opted for the second approach (see eg the self critical remarks in* ' Cinéthique on Langage et Cinéma ', p 191). *but M Cegarra's article still reflects these hesitations in the form of a detailed and relentless questioning of each single line of argument put forward by the leading film semiologist.*

In the first part of his analysis, Cegarra questions the relations between cinema/reality and cinema/narration (fiction). The most basic disagreement between the two authors seems to be Cegarra's constant refusal to accept Metz's equation of the cinema with narration (and consequently the semiology of the cinema with the study of narration). In the second part, entitled ' Method ', Cegarra examines Metz's use of the conceptual pairs syntagm/paradigm and denotation/connotation in relation to the cinema. Keeping in mind Barthes' finding that rhetoric is the signifier of ideology, Cegarra points out the difficulties and inconsistencies in an approach which, by equating cinema with narration, threatens to confuse cinematic language with the rhetoric of the cinema. It must be pointed out in this context that Metz largely solved this problem by tackling the question from a different perspective (see S Heath's notes on cinematic codes and specificity in his Glossary, p 214).

Editorial Note.
' All things develop by degrees ' (Lucretius)

' Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice ' (Lenin)
' The scalpel of Analysis ' (Ducasse)
' The aim of the text is to examine some of the problems and some of the difficulties that must be expected by anyone who wishes to make a start with the realisation of the Saussurian project of a general semiology in the field of " cinematic language " ' (C. Metz).

* All quotations are from C. Metz, *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma*, Eds Klincksieck, Paris 1968, except where otherwise specified.

 ' The semiology of the cinema has to be undertaken ' (C. Metz).

I – Preliminaries

' Those preliminaries are not useless ' (Sollers)

Metz's endeavour appears to be both meandering and precise, hasty and effective, unfortunate and auspicious, uncertain and confident. In so far as the semiology of the cinema is still in the process of finding itself, it can only attempt to clear the way, ie perform a radical reading of the texts/films, a turning back upon theories and types of criticism, effecting deconstructions, ruptures, deletions and renewals. It is also possible for semiology to get bogged down in this. In so far as it is a process of discovery, ie that it finds its method or a specific problematic, it is still possible for semiology to remain caught up in the initial stages of an uncritical or evasive play between presuppositions, preconceptions and inadequately formed ideas. This is a kind of play which, although it cannot but speak through its silences, refuses to acknowledge its speech to the point of operating a series of reversals. We will have to take into account these unresolved problems, these questions which, having been accepted as answers, underwent displacement and were in a sense deferred. We will have to return to the texts twice and follow in them the interplay of ' corrections ' and erasures, ' brackets ', ' remoulding ', ' additions ' and ' repetitions '.[1] This could only lead towards a patient reading, difficult and hazardous, hesitant but definitely tenacious. A reading which we hope others will take up and extend.

I.A *reality (unreality)/realism/representation*

' Language, whether filmic or verbal, cannot suppress the real; on the contrary, it is rooted in it ' (C. Metz).

I.A1 REAL/PHOTOGENY/DUPLICATION/DOUBLE

' The image, ie the photographic duplication of a real spectacle ' (pp 208-209). This first sentence, the simplicity of which seems to call for immediate assent, poses serious problems. It is a well known fact that whenever the primacy of representation in the cinema had to be established, critics and theoreticians promptly had recourse to this ' established fact '.[2] The concept of ' photographic duplication ' was supposed to constitute irrefutable proof of a (primary) realism of film, ie a proof of an unchallengeable, basic and primary quality of representation. But it seems to us that there is a considerable margin between photographic duplication (or reproduction) and representation. A text by Metz will help to verify the existence of such ' innocent ' or would be ' natural ' displacements, such overlapping of terms, in other

words, the assimilation of significations:

An image is not just a sign, as is the case with words, but it is first of all an object . . . an object which becomes language because it is first a *representation*, and by virtue of that representation. One could call it a language of the second degree. It does not appear as an abstract form to which one could add certain aesthetic qualities, but as that very aesthetic quality, augmented with the properties of language. In short, it appears as an organic whole within which art and language merge into each other '.

These lines are by Mitry, and Metz continues: ' This way of approaching the three instances which make up a film (*reproduction, art, language*) provides a fruitful working hypothesis. To dispute the cinema its quality of *photographic reproduction* or artistic composition amounts to a twofold negation of what is evident '.[3] We re-mark the displacement of terms (of meanings) operated by Metz:

representation→reproduction→photographic reproduction

which results in the confusion and assimilation of two distinct problems (*cinematic* representation and *photographic* reproduction or duplication). In other words, the first term is justified by the second one, representation or duplication. It is of course not our intention to deny the existence of this duplication, but we wish to draw attention to the fact that such non-innocent assimilations must be avoided as they always lead to deplorable *theoretical* results.[4] Further on, this same confusion finds its continuation: ' the cinema has as its *primary* material a body of *fragments of the real world, mediated* through their mechanical *duplication* which is made possible by means of photography '.[5] Again we find the same displacement: real (raw material) – mediated reality (reproduction/duplication). In this case, the notion of reproduction is used to redouble the notion of duplication. Reproduction is somehow thought to be the exact replica, the (final and necessary) *double* of duplication.[6] ' For Mitry, photogenic-ness[7] is bound up with duplication, but as its consequence: because the double is implicated in the plot, it is always already *parole* '.[8] And in the same text: ' The world is never photogenic '. In this way, we would obtain the following chain:

world (real)→duplication→photogenic-ness→double/*parole*.

That same concept of ' the double ' one finds in Bazin (the ' mummy ') and in Morin (the ' ghost ', 'the alter-ego ') is used here to characterise the film as the double of the (real) world by virtue of the mediating function performed by the act of duplication. Photogenic-ness itself founded on the experience and anteriority of

duplication, institutes the double as a reflection. Elsewhere Metz returns to this idea: ' to reproduce visual perception (of movement) means therefore to reproduce reality in its *entirety*. An effigy on the other hand (eg a photograph) always remains distinct from its model '.[9] We are to understand by this that representation is necessary to the cinema and that it is of the same order as the relation between model and copy (reflection or double, otherwise ' effigy '). But here we are anticipating, as Metz does not go that far. One finds with him the contradictory gesture which consists in immediately and effortlessly accepting the notion of representation and at the same time to be suspicious of it, to question its presuppositions and to confront it with *what films do with it*. This can be seen when he deals with the question of the ' impression of reality '.[10] For Metz, this ' impression ' is grounded in a number of factors: the filmic utterance is ' fully assertive '.[11] ' In the *grip* that film has over us one can detect the secret of a presence ' (p 14)/' the realising power of the filmic " *vehicle* " is as much a part of " realist " films as of " non-realist " films ' (p 15). ' We know about the genuine projective power of the cinema; the film-viewer is not oriented towards a having-been-there but towards a living being-there ' (p 16).[12] The impression of reality is due: to the projective power, to the realising power, to the grip, to assertion.

In spite of the change of level and of the unthought and unrelated differences between the levels considered – one is on the level now of the spectator (' projective power ', ' grip '), now on the level of the material (' realising power '), now on the level of the narration (' assertion '). Metz's analysis is correct and cannot be refuted (except with regard to the kind of pedagogical questions we raised earlier). But this analysis finds its closure in the theme of ' movement ' as the main creator of the ' impression of reality ': ' therefore, if one wishes to explain a *strong* phenomenon such as the impression of reality in the cinema, one must fall back on the necessity of having to rely on *positive* factors, and in particular on the *elements of reality* contained within film itself, with in the first place the reality of movement ' (p 21). Again we find that assimilation we mentioned earlier. Here its main effect is the assertion: movement is movement and nothing else, whether it is real or filmed. It seems to us that, to the contrary, one has to distinguish between real movement/reality of movement. We accept the second term, not the first one. Real movement is quite a different thing from the reality of movement. ' Movement makes for relief and relief makes for life ' Metz tells us (p 17). To say that the ' stereokinetic effect ' makes for life (or relief) can only be a metaphor, and a dangerous one at that. Elsewhere Metz writes:

movement is non-material, it can be seen but it cannot be touched. That is the reason why there cannot be two degrees of

phenomenal reality of movement, ' true ' movement and its copy. It is indeed often by an implicit reference to the sense of touch, the supreme arbiter of ' reality ' . . . that we experience the representation of an object as a reproduction: this is a big tree, standing there on the cinema screen, completely and faithfully accessible to our eyes; but if we were to reach out, our hands would only encounter an emptiness perforated by shadows and light, not a rough rugged bark . . . (p 18).

This text corrects certain misreadings which other texts invited, but on the other hand it returns to the problem of reproduction in a not quite satisfactory way. Let us examine this double game, this (positive) correction and its reverse side: a return to the ' real ', the copy, reproduction and representation. The correction effected by Metz relates the idea of movement provoking the impression of reality. Another text informs us: ' As movement is never material but always visual anyhow, to reproduce the vision of it equals the reproduction of its reality. In fact, one cannot even ' reproduce ' movement, one can only re-produce it by a second production . . .' This is important and goes some way towards what we indicated earlier: movement in the cinema has nothing to do with real movement, or rather the first is not the reproduction of the second. We are dealing with a new production, *which is no longer material*[13] (at least not in the way that one says that real movement is ' material ').

A second problem we would like to examine is the fact that Metz replaces the word ' reproduction ' with ' representation ', a step in itself sensible enough. But if this replacement is based on the use of photographic reproduction (or duplication) in order to allow the comparison and to delimit the differences, then we think this is an error, as we pointed out earlier; Metz writes:

The impression of reality . . . is always a two-sided phenomenon: one can try to explain it either by examining the perceived object or by focussing on perception itself; on the one hand the duplication is more or less ' resembling ', more or less close to its model, containing a considerable but varying amount of *indices of reality;* on the other hand, perception which is always an active construction, apprehends this duplication in a more or less *realising* manner. There is a constant interaction between the two factors: a rather convincing reproduction initiates in the spectator participatory reactions – a participation both affective and perceptive – which complete the job of bestowing reality upon the copy (p 16).

This manner of linking two problems may seem strange, especially as one can read in it the dualism: matter (duplication, reality)/mind (realising perception). What in fact does this mean: a duplication more or less close to its model? It amounts to comparing the real

 to a model and duplication to a copy, ie the film to a picture (Metz speaks of ' a rather convincing reproduction ' which to us seems an example of a naturalising reading, of the same type as that reading which considered Courbet's paintings as a ' rather convincing reproduction '). In this particular case, we would not say that the perception performs an ' active construction ' or that it works in a ' realising ' way.[14] Metz's text ends with that ' reality bestowed upon the copy ', and we think one ought to differentiate between: ' to give reality to something ' and ' to be realising '. To give reality to a film means, on the contrary, a refusal to assign the film a place in the Platonic schema of models and copies, a refusal to operate a reading which would consist of ' projections ' and ' identifications ' (p 19).

All discussions of this kind show that one should make a far more rigorous distinction – including in the terminology, where the word ' real ' is continually playing tricks – between two different problems: on the one hand the impression of reality *provoked by the diegesis*, by the fictional world, by ' what is represented ' specific to each individual artform; on the other hand the reality of the *material* used in each artform to the ends of *representation* (p 22)).

Finally, the problem seems to be posed correctly, at least in respect to the mistrust towards the word ' real '; but Metz seems to attribute reality only to the ' material ' which according to him has only one goal: representation. In another passage we read that the impression of reality is ' provoked by the diegesis ',[15] which appears to be rather presuming on the characteristics Metz attributes to this diegesis. We will come back to this point later.

I.A2 REALISM/' ONTOLOGICAL ' REALISM/TRUE NARRATIVES

' A narrative is an ensemble of *events* . . . the first task of the narrative act, in order for it to exist, is to make these events unreal ' (p 32) and further on: ' It is always the event which forms the fundamental unit of the narrative ' (p 32) Metz talks about narrative in terms of events and the link between the two is effected by a process of ' rendering unreal ', ie ' un-realisation ' ' actualisation '). We therefore have the following schema:

events→un-realisation→narrative

This term ' un-realisation ' can, at first sight, appear suitable and radically expel (on a theoretical level) the notion of representation. We consciously wrote ' can appear ', as Metz tells us further on: ' "true " narratives are subject, just as much as other narratives, to the form of unreality we are dealing with in this context ', because apart from realistic stories (of which no one

claims that they really 'happened'), there are also '*true stories*' (p 30). Let us reconstitute our schema:

$$\text{events} \rightarrow \text{un-realisation} \rightarrow \text{narrative} \begin{cases} - \text{realistic stories} \\ - \text{true stories} \end{cases}$$

It is the first term of the chain ('events') which raises questions. Metz informs us that he is dealing with a 'temporal sequence of events' (p 35). In spite of the importance of the word 'sequence', one could question this primacy, this anteriority awarded to the event, in short, the *meaning* of the word 'event'. For the time being we operate a suspension and defer our explanation and the analysis of the constellation of terms involved. Our text will return to this question of its own accord. But this must not prevent us from taking up the dichotomy: realistic stories/true stories (an opposition which is perhaps not as violent as would appear from Metz's text). In fact, the realistic story is as true as the true story, or to put it the other way around: the realistic story is in no way less true than the true story. Both are fictions, both are stories before being (if they can be so at all) true or veracious.

When he talks about 'true stories', Metz has in mind 'narratives of events which constitute history', 'historical narratives' (p 30). In another passage he also classifies as true stories: 'narratives of every day life (I tell a friend what I have done yesterday), auto-narratives (my memories narrated at the same time that I call them to mind)' (p 30), and it would appear that this can only be done by relying upon the authority of a metaphor or of a mixture of series with very different signifying processes (eg films, press, spoken narrative, conversation, reminding oneself of something). That this can only lead to a dead end is demonstrated by statements such as: 'the' secret 'of the cinema is that . . . it realises . . . the imaginary to a degree which has never before been reached' (p 24), or by characterising narrative as 'a form of man's imaginary' (p 35), or by writing: 'Remembrance, because it is a narrative, is fully imaginary', which seems to be a double confusion: the one which makes narrative into a recollection, and its corollary which is manifested in the claim that narrative is 'imaginary' (to actualise the narrative would then in fact be to re-actualise it, to call it back to (one's) mind). To conclude this paragraph, one must underline the importance of a sentence such as: 'realism refers to the organisation of the content, not to the status of narrativity' (p 30), without overestimating its value. What strikes us as more important is Metz's rejection of the 'alleged' ontological 'realism of film (theory Bazin-Monier)' (p 16).

I.A3 REPRESENTATION/THE REPRESENTED/(WORLD: NARRATIVE)

We will once more examine the series of terms: narrative/real –

realism/true narratives, but this time we will apply other ' categories ' which seem to lead a very equivocal existence in Metz's text. He writes: ' those attempts (ie Eisenstein's) rested upon a very accurate intuition, namely the duality of the represented and the representation '. In order to understand such a sentence, one has to know something about what one could designate as: the mask-frame dispute. Some people, eg Bazin, regarded the screen as a *masking device* ('a mobile masking device passing over (read " in front of ") a continuous reality '[16]), others, ' the aesthetes of the frame ' as Metz calls them, regarded the screen as a *framing device:* ' the image is not part of the world, but a picture '.[17] Metz quotes with full approval what he calls Mitry's ' crucial development ':

> the cinema is at the same time represented world and representation of the world. The screen acts as a mask for ' the given-in-image ' (what is represented) and as a frame for ' the image-constituting-given ' (representation).[18]

Let us try to examine the terms of this dispute, which, in spite of what Metz says about it, is by no means ' the quarrel of the artist and the psychologist '.[18] It has been established that Metz accepts the duality: frame/mask, which implies the duality: representation/represented, or representation of the world/world represented. How is it possible to talk about film as if it were a ' world '? One might as well say that the world, the real, is also a film. Let's try and make a schema: world→representation→ world (represented). Thus it appears that film is only a reflection of the real brought about by a simple representational specularisation. It becomes more complicated when Metz writes: " It is well known that the specific characteristic of the cinema is that it transforms the *world into a discourse* ',[19] ' cinema is a language of reality, the specific characteristic of the cinema is that it transforms the world into a discourse all the while conserving its " world-ness " ' (p 143), and also: ' film is a world organising itself into a narrative ',[20] ' cinema is at the same time world and narrative '.[21] To understand these statements, we have to add some terms to our first schema in order to complete the chain:

world→ representation→world
transformation→discourse (narrative)

In Mitry's text, following an ' important analysis ', Metz finds this ' apt formulation ': ' the essential magic of the cinema is due to the fact that the " given reality " becomes the very element of its own fabulation '.[22] Before finishing the ' closure ' of the schema, let us continue the game of sample – gathering: ' the real does not allow itself to be organised into a discourse, its double can do so ',[23]

'the double (ie the image) is always *parole*'[24] and finally: 'film is world twice over'.[25] This is the schema:

representation→world (double)
world→
transformation→world (discourse/narrative)

Some remarks:

1. This schema seems to represent a crass metaphor for the Hegelian triad: affirmation – negation – negation of the negation. The justification for this allegation can be found in the two terms used by Metz 'transformation' – 'conservation'. This metonymical displacement reproduces an essentially Hegelian gesture: an *Aufhebung*. Film would then be nothing but a gesture back to the world in order to 'effect the relief through supersession'[26] of what would have subsisted (or in-sisted) in film as *truth*: to wit its 'world-ness'. The truth of film would therefore be nothing else than this taking over of an anterior truth, the truth-of-the-world-as-world, a procedure which would give film its truth and found its (the) discourse. We think, on the contrary, that one should think that 'arrow', that schema, not as a displacement, but as a radical qualitative mutation.

2. Mitry's 'apt formulation', taken up by Metz, has the advantage of linking the double notion: 'world-terminal', world-double and world-discourse. Unfortunately this link, this relation, thought through the always already divided category of the 'double' and that of the 'world' seems to constitute, at the most, only a *mirror*. According to Metz, there is no discontinuity (dynamic tension), but continuity as a specular relation: the dual world and the immediate double, having become discursive, of that world, both come and reverse themselves onto one and the same surface. They stand in the same relation to each other as signifier and signified: recto and verso of one sheet of paper.

3. 'The double is always *parole*' must be understood as: in this double one can always hear the anterior and displaced echo of a voice (the world), which, through the representational effect, assumes the filmic effect as an offshoot or a son. No need to elaborate on the presuppositions of such a schema: it has to be reconstructed *completely*, if that hasn't been done already by the films themselves.

I.A4 ('NATURAL') EXPRESSIVITY/EXPRESSION/SIGNIFICATION/'EXPERIENCE'

'The cinema is expressive. It is so even twice: as art of reality (denotation), as art itself (connotation)'.[27] Metz informs us that 'the notion of *expression* is taken here in the sense defined by M Dufrenne. There is expression when a 'sense' is in a way immanent to something, directly emanates from it, indistinguishable from its very *form*'.[28] This notion of expression has to be fully understood,

because that which it orders – let us say a certain ' theory ' in the Althusserian sense, with a small letter and quotation marks – could be considerably displaced or *overloaded* by it. Therefore we must ask what all this could mean: ' a sense which is ' immanent ' to something ', ' which *emanates directly* from it ', ' is indistinguishable from its very form ', even when dealing with the cinema.[29] Metz tells us: ' Aesthetic expressivity in the cinema grafts itself onto a natural expressivity, the expressivity of a landscape or a face shown by the film '.[30] Consequently he characterises the ' aesthetic dimension ' of the cinema as ' expressivity on top of expressivity '. This poses two major problems:

1. What is ' natural expressivity ' (of a landscape or a face)? In a note added to the second version of the text (p 82), Metz writes:

> amongst other examples of expressivity we selected precisely what is commonly referred to as ' the expression of the face '. There is no doubt whatsoever that it is not due to an effect of ' cinematic language ' – nor to any other explicitly informative code – that the spectator succeeds in deciphering the expressions he reads on the face of the film hero. But neither is it a purely natural effect, because facial expressions have widely different meanings in different cultures (proof of this can be found in the extreme difficulty one has in ' understanding ' facial expressions in Japanese films). The fact remains, however, that in French films we understand them ' as a matter of course ', ie by virtue of a very ancient and very profound knowledge within us, which functions ' by itself ' and which (we) cannot distinguish any more from the act of perception itself.

All this is no doubt very true, but so called ' natural ' expressivity *is not* so called ' aesthetic ' expressivity. This means that there is no *grafting* of the second onto the first, ie there is no anteriority of ' natural ' expressivity. We seem to be confronted here with a reduction of ' aesthetic ' expressivity.

2. Metz writes: ' The expressivity of the world and the expressivity of art essentially comply with the same semiological mechanism: the " meaning " emanates naturally from the signifying ensemble, without recourse to a code. It is on the level of the signifier, and on that level only, that there is a difference '. Up to this point we more or less agree, except for the alleged non-existence of the code (but Metz adds in a footnote: ' without recourse to a *special* and explicit code '). The sentence continues: ' It is on the level of the signifiers, and on that level only, that there is a difference: in the case of the expressivity of the world, the signifiers were made by nature; in the case of the expressivity of art, they were made by man ' (p 82). This opposition: nature-world/man-art

seems factitious in that it implies the idealist dualism of nature/culture. Moreover, to think the expressivity as produced by the signifier and the signifier as produced by 'man', is questionable. A little further we read: 'One should undertake a study of the problem of cinematic expressivity from this point of view, and inevitably one would have to talk about style, therefore about the notion of auteur' (p 82). This chain (expressivity→style→auteur). is not innocent. It certainly leads to some weighty judgments in the field of literature:

'Connotation in literature is expressive' (p 82)/'literature, especially poetry, is an infinitely more improbable art (than cinema)': how to succeed in effecting that madly daring *grafting* operation: to endow with aesthetic expressivity (ie *in some way natural*) [Metz's italics] the 'words of our tribe'. (p 81)/'Verbal language . . . analyses and reconstructs human experience from beginning to end (p 142-143)'/'The term literature, in order for it to exist, implies that a man first writes a book . . . similarly to a book, film is expression rather than signification' (p 88)/'A film and a book express themselves' (p 86).

Finally, we would like to point out that a sentence such as: 'Cinema, as all arts, is a "one way communication"; it is in fact[31] more a means of expression than it is a means of communication' (p 79) could only lead to statements such as: 'the filmed spectacle, whether natural or arranged, already had its own expressivity, as it was in fact a "piece of world" (p 80) '/' the cinema proceeds by means of complete "*chunks of reality*" (p 117) [Metz italics].

IA5 REFLECTION – COPY/REINTERPRETATION – PRESENTATION/MONTAGE

As we know, Metz declared his opposition to Eisenstein's theories of montage because he saw in them (an attempt to bring about) the foundation of the cinema as *langue*. The point is not that we should return to Eisenstein's texts in order to accept them just as they are,[32] but we have to ask whether *on this point* Metz's text is completely innocent. Is it really the concept of a cinematic *langue* he aimed for when dealing with Eisenstein's writings? Wouldn't it be rather the radical non-representational aspect of these theories, in short, a certain theory of cinematic anti-representation? Wasn't there *inscribed* in the play of Metz's discourse that essential unspoken, that almost inaudible but extremely insistent speech, which strove to refute a theory which was, after all, *dangerous?*

But first we must take up a whole constellation of key-terms which order Metz's text. eg He tells us that:

L'Avventura by Antonioni possesses three autonomous signifying ensembles: the cinematic language (*L'Avventura* as an *œuvre*) a

140 certain ideology (the one of ' the modern couple ', the exhaustion of feelings, etc) which originates within a particular *historical situation* and socio-cultural situation, in itself different from the cinema but likely to *reflect* itself in *the* films (p 79) [my italics].

The definite article indicates clearly that *all* films are characterised by that reflection. This is a rather grave error: in a particular John Ford western would we have the exact *reflection* of a specific historical (or socio-cultural) situation? To us it would seem more exact to say that ideology always intervenes, not as simply a product of history, but as history itself, which is produced by ideology and of which it is not a product itself. The Indians are ' cruel ', not because history has seen them as such, ideology merely repeating (and assuming) it, but because ideology produced them as ' cruel ', in the same gesture producing history. Hence the history of the Red Indian as the history of ' lived cruelty '. To claim that the birth of an ideology has a specific historical context is one thing (rarely seen in the cinema), to say that ideology is produced by history, is another thing altogether.

The division of a film into ' three autonomous signifying ensembles ' has been elaborated by Metz in order to replace his previous distinction between ' the level of *saying* ' and ' the level of the *said* '. In a footnote to the second version of the text, he writes:

the distinction between ' the saying ' and ' the said ' . . . should be relativised; one cannot identify what pertains to one or the other except in relation to the instance of enunciation (' saying ') at issue in a particular analysis. What belonged to the level of ' said ' will become ' saying ' when one analyses another signifying ensemble (p 78).

Metz continues:

It remains therefore true in a sense that everything pertains to ' the level of saying ' and nothing to the level of ' the said ', and that alternatively, one could find that everything is on the level of ' the said ' and nothing on the level of ' the saying ' (p 78).

Metz concludes:

One cannot escape the closure of meaning, unless one stops speaking about man (p 78).

This displacement – let us call it the correction through the theory of the ' three autonomous signifying ensembles ' of the theory of ' the saying and the said ' – invites a few remarks:

1. If at a certain point in the development of his theory, Metz sees himself forced to relativise the opposition saying/said, he attributes this to the fact that ' a lot of things which, in the study of a

particular signifying system, appear as pure substance in fact correspond to significations that were constituted *elsewhere*, and which were *form* in that other locus ' (p 79). In that first stage we had on the one hand: the said-elsewhere-form vs the saying. The correction therefore consists in the extension, the development of the second term (the saying) ie a movement from the said to the saying, from an elsewhere-form to a here-forming. This is a shift which remains unthought.

2. The three signifying ensembles (Metz also calls them ' systems ') only pertain to the saying:

The first ' ensemble ' (' cinematic language ' in general) ' extends far beyond ' the film, according to Metz. But, of course, it could not exist *on the other side:* in the reality of the other signifying systems which *are not* the cinema.

The second ' ensemble ', ' the " *œuvre* " *adds* [Metz italics] to the cinematic language . . . many special constructions which do not belong to cinematic writing ' (p 79). The present tense in that sentence is rather annoying: perhaps it would have been better to say: ' which did not belong '.

The third ' ensemble ' (' a certain ideology ' *reflecting* itself in the film) also exclusively concerns the level of ' the saying ', but this ' saying ' is only the ' *reflection* ' of a previous said, anterior to the film. It is because of this ' reflection ' that Metz ' modifies ' his first theory: the said does not oppose itself to the saying anymore, but motivates and constructs it, gives it form to the extent that it is ' *form* ' itself (as Metz points out). We once more come across that precious copy of the real, representation of a preceding something which is necessary for it to exist.

3. Metz speaks of ' *autonomous* signifying ensembles ' and of ' the cinema as a locus where a great many signifying systems intersect, all with a relative autonomy ' (p 79). Is it then only the third ensemble which would be a ' reflection ', and not the first two? That would lead to an ominous conclusion: as the ideological system would then always be already constituted elsewhere and imported through the fact of this reflection, it would be no more than a layer that could be detached from the film: one would be able to read (to accept) a film *in spite* of its ideology, even if that ideology were a fascist one. However, it seems to us that the signifying ensembles are not autonomous in relation to each other, but that these ensembles are autonomous vis-a-vis the (real) world, or to put it another way: the ideology of a film is not a detachable ' form ', because it is also *inscribed* in the other ' ensembles ' where it plays perhaps a more *dominant* role, although far more difficult to read.[83] Metz confuses ideology as a signifying system with what Badiou calls ' separable ideological utterances '. (Alain Badiou, ' *l'Autonomie du processus esthétique* ', in *Cahiers Marxistes-Leninistes*, no 12/13, July-August 1966.)

4. It appears that Metz commits a double error. He divides the film

into three signifying systems *on the basis* of evidence he found in *one single* system: the one in which the ' reflection ' would be inscribed. Secondly, he isolates every system by attributing an autonomy to it which is difficult to explain (we did take into account that he added the word ' relative ', but he draws no conclusions from the insertion of this all important adjective). Metz is also guilty of committing a double confusion: on the one hand he fails to distinguish between ' historical reality ' and ' effect of presence '/ ' ideological series ' and ' signification effect ' (cf Badiou); on the other hand he confuses the ' effect of presence ' with the ' signification effect ' (' the effect of the presence of signification ' – ' the effect of the signification of presence ').

On this level Metz has not managed to pass beyond the idealist opposition saying/said, and one could well ask what ' man ' has to do with the ' closure of meaning ', the latter being well and truly real. All this leads to unfortunate errors, such as this correlative interpretation of films and books: ' films will always be better at *showing* things, while books will always be better at *saying* them '.[34]

Now we are in a position to grasp more fully Metz's refutation of the montage theories. He writes:

> Eisenstein relentlessly applies himself to the categorical refusal to the cinema of any form of *descriptive realism*. He does not admit the shooting of a scene in continuity, he has only contempt for what he variously designates as ' naturalism ', ' purely objective representation ', simply ' informative ' narrative (as opposed to an ' organic ' narrative with ' pathos ', ie in the last analysis broken down in sections and edited). – Couldn't a filmed spectacle have *its own* beauty? This is not to be admitted. As if he were constantly reassuring himself, this great artist, whose glorious genius could have provided him with a thousand assurances, manages every time to contrive it so that *beauty, which is mercilessly denied to any profilmic instance,* must without any possible doubt spring from the filming process itself and from nowhere else, because there is a filming process involved with each separate ' shot ', and therefore there is composition. But Eisenstein never passes up a chance to devalue all the art that may have been invested in the modelling of the individual segments in favour of his preoccupation with sequential arrangement (p 41).

This text is rather representative of Metz's critical endeavour. What are Eisenstein's ' faults '? He refuses ' realism ', ' naturalism ' and in general, he refuses representation. What Metz comes to the defence of, in this scene, is simple *representation*. This requires, with an ' adversary ' such as Eisenstein, a type of criticism we have already had occasion to analyse and which in this instance takes on four main forms:

1. The nominalist criticism of atonement: Eisenstein has to be awarded the title ' great artist ' in order to follow that up by saying that he – as all ' great artists ' – made some mistakes. In this way, it is suggested that all great thought inevitably contains its share of errors. Finally, it is a matter of saying that genius has gone too far, but that this in no way diminishes the ' glory ' of the cineast.
2. Further in the text we find that same type of criticism, but this time it is a matter of devaluing Eisenstein's theories by establishing a relation of analogy between them and activities of play: children's toys, ' meccano, electric trains, games consisting of the assembling of toys ' (p 42). This is the second form of criticism: criticism by analogy, by collage (montage!) of simplified, simplifying and banalizing ' examples '.
3. The third type of criticism consists of a flattening process through reduction:

> (montage) reconstitutes a double of the initial object, a double which can be fully grasped in thought, as it is a product of thought: the intelligibility of the object has itself become an object. And one simply does not take into account that the natural object served as a *model*. On the contrary, it is the constructed object which is the model-object and the only thing required from the natural object is that it be quiet and behave . . . This reconstruction . . . is a simulation . . . It is a structural skeleton of the object set up as a second object, it always is a sort of prosthesis (p 44).

Eisenstein is not concerned with bringing about a simulation, a simulacrum, nor does he construct an object which would be a reflection (or the prosthesis, if you like) of the real object. He does not reconstitute a ' double ' of the so called ' initial ' object, a pure ' product of thought '. In fact, all these belong to an area refuted by Eisenstein. And Metz knows this, because thirty lines lower he refers ' correctly ' to this anti-naturalist, anti-representation theory. The crowning feat of this criticism consists in attributing to the theory one wishes to refute, all the characteristics of its anti-theory, the one being defended; and this in order to reject the first one all the more drastically and to emphasise the counter-poison: the dogma of the re-doubled representation.
4. The fourth type of this genre of criticism consists in ' anticipating in order to give a false answer ': ' To Rossellini who shouted " things are there, why manipulate them?" Eisenstein *could have* answered " things are there, they should be manipulated ".' And Metz adds:

> Eisenstein never shows us the course of the world, but always, as he says himself, the course of the world refracted through ' an ideological viewpoint ', entirely in thought, *signifying*

[Metz's italics] from beginning to end. *Sense* [Metz italics] doesn't suffice, signification has to be added (p 44).

Once more we are confronted with an obsession with ' things '. Regarding the *sense*, maybe Eisenstein does reject it, at least he rejects its would be ' natural ' character (' The " natural " sense of things and beings ' says Metz, p 45).

From this ' critique ', Metz draws the conclusions one expects: (a) refusal of what he calls ' manipulation ': ' the supremacy of manipulation is not a very fruitful attitude towards the cinema ', and he adds ' nor for that matter to poetry ' (p 46)/' Isn't the cinema the triumph of that pseudo-physis which is precisely made impossible by the manipulatory attitude? Isn't cinema founded entirely on that famous " impression of reality "?' (p 46)/' The cinema never really lent itself to manipulation ' (p 47).
(b) The second conclusion is the decision to label montage and its theories as ' the syntagmatic mind ', ' it is in the transmission of the message that the code finds its triumph and final fulfilment; it is a great feast for the syntagmatic mind ' (p 47)/' the moment of the paradigm is at the time of preparation, as was the filming of each separate " shot " for Eisenstein. The great moment, impatiently awaited, thought about from the very beginning, is the syntagmatic moment ' (p 43) Because to Metz, the organisation of the cinema is ' manifestly syntagmatic ' (p 43) his criticism of the montage films is in fact no more than reproaching them for being syntagmatically bad. Eisenstein's films are supposed to be films with a bad syntagmatics because they refuse to construct in a ' natural ' manner, by means of a copy of the raw material of the given reality. On this point Metz goes even so far that he is forced to speak of a ' prior paradigmatic activity ' in respect to montage films.

On the one hand, it isn't at all certain that the cinema of montage is a predominantly syntagmatic cinema (in the sense that Metz gives to the term. We will come back to this point later). On the other hand, to believe in a ' prior paradigmatic ' is idealist on two levels: this prior paradigmatic activity could be performed by the real in its quality as ' pieces of reality ' ' already arranged '. If it is to be understood like this, then there is no need to elaborate on the value of the term ' paradigm ' in this context. On a second level, this prior paradigmatic activity could be that of the cinematic *langue* (' still very little aware of itself ' writes Metz). That would appear to be the level Metz has in mind, and to which he is opposed (but it must be clearly stated: he opposes it in order to affirm the pre-eminence of the syntagm, as the question of the *paradigmatic aspect of the films themselves* is never examined *here*).
(c) The third conclusion consists in opposing two types of cinema: the cinema of montage, called cinema of ' reconstruction ' (p 44,

p 46), of ' creation ',[35] of ' reinterpretation ' and the cinema of ' presentation '[36] (read: re-presentation). But this opposition is false on two counts, and for one and *the same reason*:

- the opposition is resolved by one *common* term: both types of cinema are described as equally syntagmatic.
- the opposition is based on the relationship the cinema ' must ' have with a term they are supposed to have in common, but which is outside of them: world, the real, events/*langue* (' in the cinema the real is presented or represented; in the cinema of montage the thing represented would be a " *langue* " . . . a fairly rigorous system logically anterior to any message ', p 51).

In this way we see that Metz's critique of the theories of montage is an assimilation of *two different* problems: the cinema as *langue*/ the cinema as anti-representation. The first term is rejected and this permits the rejection of the second term, which is a more important matter. All this could perhaps shed an interesting light on a re-reading of the relations between Metz's theory and Pasolini's theory of the ' im-segni ', a subject on which Metz probably has still a lot to say.[37]

I.B FICTION/NARRATION/NARRATIVE/NARRATIVITY/DIEGESIS

' The narrative quality of the cinema . . . emerges . . . more and more as one of the major problems to be confronted by any reflection on the cinema ' C. Metz in *Critique*, no 214, p 235.

' This notion of a so-called surpassing or reduction of narrativity '. C. Metz, *Essais*, p 205.

' The cinema, fictional and narrative art '. C. Metz, *Essais*, p 16.

' The basic formula, which has never changed, consists in calling " a film " a large unit which tells a story; and " to go to the cinema " means to go and see that story '. C. Metz, *Essais*, p 52.

I.B1 CINEMA AND NARRATION (FOUNDATION OF THE CINEMA AS NARRATION)

When Metz wants to found the cinema as narration, he grounds this on a whole series of realities which, according to him, are irrefutable. The economy of that founding gesture takes the form of a correlation of five homogeneous areas. The figure of the duplicate is here doubled by the figure of the foundation. Of course, the figure of the foundation will be required in return to redouble the figure of the duplicate, ie of the reflection/the copy/the representation.

1. *The origins of the cinema as foundation*:

To be sure one has often, and not without reason, observed that, if the cinema took the path of narrative – what Ricci calls ' la voie romanesque ' – if the fictional feature film, after all

 only one of the conceivable genres, has managed to secure the lion's share of the total production, this was the result of a positive evolution witnessed by the history of the cinema, and especially by the great turning point leading from Lumière to Méliès, from the ' cinematograph ' to the ' cinema '.

Metz adds: ' It was necessary that the very nature of the cinema made this evolution if not inevitable, at least possible, perhaps even probable '.[38] This origin is but an assigned finitude: the history of the cinema is but the history of the shifting, the repetition of that origin – the origin (the genesis) of the cinema is also its end.

2. *Demand as foundation:* ' There were the spectator's needs, in short: *the demand* ' (p 52) a pressure which is ' perfectly capable of exerting an influence . . . on *the formula of the spectacle* ' (p 52). Therefore ' the basic formula which has never changed, consists in calling " a film " a large unit which tells us a story; and " to go to the cinema " means to go and see that story '. And the reason why that formula has never changed, Metz informs us, is because ' it has been accepted ', ' it is a rather pleasing one '. The naivety of such an analysis is astounding. One wonders whether Metz has ever heard of *ideology*, or whether he knows that film is also a commodity which can be sold and makes *profits*. We radically reject affirmations such as: ' the cinema is not subject, at least not for a large part, to the great divorce between living art and the public ' (p 14).

3. *Characteristics of memory as foundation:* In this connection Metz cites the:

> filmological experiments regarding the traces left by films on memory – whether it be experiments by D J Bruce, P Fraisse, G de Montmoullin, M Rébeillard, Romano or Botsch, all lead in different ways to the same idea: the only thing one remembers of a film is the plot and at best a few images (p 53).

To require from the positive knowledge of the faculties of memory to found the cinema as narration or plot, means on the one hand to believe that knowledge can have the cinema (in its reality) as its (real) object; on the other hand it amounts to elevating a mere part of experience to the phantasmatic order of quasi-knowledge.

4. *Everyday experience as foundation*: of course, Metz treats us to the inevitable story of ' the peasant who is able to remember the film in its entirety[39] . . . because it was the only film available that year ' (p 53). This everyday ' experience ' is supposed to ' prove ' that the most important part of a film is the story . . . as it is the only thing one remembers! To believe that experience can produce by itself a knowledge-effect, that it can be used as a foundation, is the same as trying to find in the immediacy of lived experience some kind of ' theoretical ' pseudo-concrete aspect

which is also supposed to be its origin and foundation. This is in fact empiricism.

5. *Cinema is its own foundation:* The cinema is narration because it is cinema! (cf. 38) Metz writes that the cinema is ' a good storyteller ', that ' narrativity fits it like a glove '. It is for that reason that things ' came so quickly ' and ' since that time have remained there where we see them now ' (p 52). Metz adds: ' the reign of " history "[40] is so compelling that the image, reputedly the constitutive element of the cinema, fades away, according to some analysts,[41] behind its own construction: the plot ' (p 52). This amounts to an elevation of the story (the narration) to a quasi-transcendental order.

All this ends up in the only place it could possibly lead to: the cinema is –

> a good storyteller ' because ' it all happens as if a kind of current of induction linked the images together, *no matter what one does* (Metz italics). As if it were *beyond the forces of the human mind* (of the spectator as well as of the film-maker) to deny the emerging of a ' thread ' as soon as there are two images in succession (p 53).

That the ' reign of history ' can establish itself is because there is an all powerful God keeping an eye on things. We couldn't ourselves find a better way to designate the link between narrativity and theology.

I.B2 NARRATIVE[42]/DESCRIPTION: IMAGE

' a narrative is a set of events ' Metz tells us, ' it is a closed sequence of events (and not a sequence of closed events) . . . the closure of the narrative is a constant, the closure of the narrated is a variable ', but ' it is always the event which forms the unit of the narrative ' (p 32). Metz defines the narrative as ' a closed discourse which un-realises a temporal sequence of events ' (p 35). Two remarks have to be made here:

First, one can ask whether in fact ' the closure of the narrative is a constant '. Is the narrative of *L'Homme qui Ment* by Robbe-Grillet really closed? Regarding the film *Dead of Night*[43], Metz writes: ' The film does have an ending, namely the last image ', which seems rather an extreme simplification of the problem. In fact, what Metz calls ' closure of the narrative ' is only *the end* of the film. Metz's statement can only be grounded on the by now automatic confusing of narrative and film. We have therefore the following de-doubling:

narration – narrative = film
narrated – events = transcendental dimension of the film

Secondly, one should question the notion of ' events '. Metz writes

 that: ' the event forms the fundamental unit of the narrative ' (p 32). When one reads the following sentence, one wonders what kind of *unit* he has in mind:

> in all narratives using articulated language as a vehicle (written and oral narratives)[44] we know that the specifically narrative unit is not the phoneme nor the moneme – which are units of the idiom, not of the narrative – but rather the sentence or at least some segment on a level approximating the level of the sentence (p 33).

Apart from the fact that such an idea does not take into account monemes and phonemes, under the pretext that they are not units of ' narrative ', the sentence has thus been burdened with an event-like quality which is far from elucidating its *nature*. In the case of the cinema, it seems tautological to say that ' the event forms the fundamental unit of the narrative '. If this were not so, in what locus would this event be situated?

In his definition of the narrative, Metz opposes narrative/description/image:

> 1. The *narrative* is a:
> system of temporal transformations. In all narratives the narrated is a more or less chronological sequence of events; in all narratives the narrating instance takes on the form of a sequence of signifiers which it takes the user a certain amount of time to peruse (p 27).
>
> 2.
> With the *image*, on the contrary, the represented is in principle a *punctum temporis* which has been immobilised; the consumption of the image by the user is also supposed to be instantaneous; and even if it does take longer, the consumption of the image does not consist of going over the signifying elements in a unique and obligatory sequential order . . . One of the functions of the narrative is to ' exchange the currency ' of one time into another time (p 27).

The image ' exchanges the currency of one space into another space '. About description, Metz says that it has a hybrid status: ' it exchanges the currency of space into the currency of time ' (p 27).

> 3.
> Description appears simultaneously as the opposite of narration and as one of the great figures or great *moments* of narration. . . . Narration and description are both in opposition to the image, because their signifier is temporalised, while the signifier of the image is instantaneous . . . but . . . narration and description are in opposition to each other by an aspect of

their signified: narration has a temporalised signified, description has an instantaneous one (p 28).

This is a table of this double relationship of 'kinship' and 'antinomy', as Metz puts it:

	Signifier	Signified
narration	temporalized	temporalized
description		instantaneous
image	instantaneous	instantaneous
	(narrating instance)	(narrated instance)

Metz gives the following 'simplified examples' (p 27):

- isolated shot of a desert expanse = *image* (signified: space – Signifier: space)
- many partial and successive shots of this desert expanse = *description* (Signified: space – Signifier: time)
- many successive shots of a convoy moving through this desert expanse = *narration* (Signified: time – Signifier: time)

Returning to the antinomy on the level of the narrated instance (Signified) of the narration and the description, Metz writes:

within the narrative, the moment of description is immediately recognisable: it is the only one in which temporal succession of signifiers – though the element of succession remains – does not refer to some temporal relation (successive or otherwise) between the corresponding signifieds. All it does is establish a relation of spatial co-existence between those signifieds (p 28).

narration	Signifier temporal succession	Signified succession
description	temporal succession	no succession (spatial co-existence)

It may indeed be a matter of some urgency that the precise location, ie the modes, of these two large elements, narration and description, were determined. But to achieve this, even if it leads to a total opposition between the two terms – which isn't proven, at least not for *certain* films – a rigorous method of differentiation is required. Metz, however, seems to think this opposition in terms of one and the same privileged category: temporality. To the

150 (signifying) temporal succession corresponds a temporal succession on the level of the signified, ie of the narrated instance. But this second succession is therefore of a consequential order: succession is doubled by a consequence, in other words, by an effect of causality. This can be deduced from the fact that the signified, the narrated instance, is nothing but the narration itself.[45] But Metz does not oppose description and narration in terms of their signifying level – as they possess on that level an identical characterisation: temporal succession – he only opposes them on the level of the signified. This means that the characteristic of narration is that it is narration, and for that reason it is not description. And in the same way, description is description in that it is not narration. This seems to relate to something quite different from a mere circular game of tautologies: one could recognise in such a ' demonstration ' what Barthes designates as ' the chronological illusion '. Barthes writes: ' Temporality is only a structural class of the narrative '.[46] To try and make it the very structure of the narrative, as does Metz, is to bear witness to an illusion according to which ' time does not belong to the discourse as such, but to the *referent* '.[46] *Barthes* also points out that to believe in a ' real time ' or believe that time is the end all of the narrative, pertains to that same ' referential, realist illusion '.

I.B3 NARRATIVITY/DIEGESIS

Metz rejects ' this notion of a so-called surpassing or reduction of narrativity ' (p 205) because, according to him, ' the specific quality of the narrative film is to narrate ' (p 144). If that is indeed the whole problem, there is no need to put it in such abrupt terms. It is not a question of ' surpassing ' narrativity or of reducing it, as such gestures grant narrativity a right of priority or clear the way for its redoubled return. The real questions are:

1. Is the narrative cinema the *whole* cinema?
2. Is the so-called narrative cinema *exclusively* narrative?
3. Is narration *nothing else but* narration?

On those points, Metz's discourse seems to rest on a presupposition, always that same one: the cinema as narration. Thus:

> The cinema, although it could have been used in a great many ways, serves mostly to tell *stories*, even to the point where theoretically non-narrative films (eg documentary shorts, didactic shorts, etc . . .) on the whole obey the same semiological mechanisms as the ' main features ' (p 144).

No need to comment on such statements.

What Metz calls the *diegesis* (after Marcel Martin), is in fact the narration. Its locus, the diegetic locus, is constituted by the signified of denotation. The signifier of denotation being located on the screen itself (*le lieu écranique*). The units of the signified of denota-

tion form the diegesis.

Metz writes: 'The theories maintaining that montage is all powerful . . . simply prove the reality of a "*logic of implication*" through which the image becomes language, and which is *identical with the narrativity of film*' (p 54). Metz also speaks of '*diegetic reality*'[48] and of the *logic of implication* similar to the *logic of the real* itself.[47] For Metz, the diegesis is nothing but a *mimesis*. This will entail some serious disturbances in the essential signification of the denotation.

I.B4 REALISM (CINEMA DIRECT/CINEMA VERITE)/' REGULATED ' CINEMA

'In short', Metz writes, 'within the kind of cinema trying to pass for reality, the essential division seems to be between the two poles of the cinema direct (the ideology of the objective recording of external reality) and cinema verite (the ideology of the redeeming intervention)' (p 195)

> It is not the young cinema as a whole which is the true heir of the cosmophanic myths, but rather a certain irrational optimism which has developed around the cinema verite: a belief in a sort of innocence of an image which in some mysterious manner would have eluded all connotation . . . to put it in Barthesian terms: the desperate myth of some iconic adamism (p 194).

These analytic remarks by Metz are very important in that they bring to light the triple ideology sustaining the notion of cinema verite:

1. *The ideology of the 'recourse to the iconic record':*

> The very speech of the heroes is assumed to be caught in a raw (*brute*) and naiscent state. It is supposed to be part of the image. the human-noise level being part and parcel of the image. In this way, this speech would in its turn be drawn into the vast circuit of the innocence of the visuals. Hence the abundance of interviews in cinema verite films.

Metz adds: 'pathetic attempt' (p 195).

2. *the claim for objectivity through the use of the image:* characterised by Metz as 'a somewhat weird species of behaviourism' (p 195).

3. the last level of this ideology constitutes 'the vulgarised and eclectic outcome of *various revelatory and therapeutic methods* belonging to modern psycho-sociology (psychodrama, group-dynamics, brainstorming, depth-interview, psychotherapy, etc)' (p 195).

It is clear that Metz has the merit of rejecting what he terms 'the cinema trying to pass for reality' and which we will simply call *realism*. But on this point of terminology Metz would disagree: he defends what he designates as 'the two great polar opposites

 of filmic modernity ':

– ' *the cinéma-fou* . . . cinema of exuberance and invention ' (eg Godard)

– ' the cinema of premeditation and obliqueness ' (eg Alain Resnais) (p 197)

However, Metz uses the term realism to characterise both types: in the case of Godard, ' a copiously disorganised *realism*, a brilliant and euphoric avatar of poiesis ', in the case of Resnais, ' a meticulously indirect realism, triumph of the mimesis and of the reconstruction of the model ' (p 198). In sum, Metz accepts the notion of realism when it is not the one promulgated by cinema verite or cinema direct, and he makes a distinction between realist cinema and the ' cinema trying to pass for reality ' without thinking through either the difference he thus introduces or the specificity of what he designates as realist cinema. When he wants to specify the meaning of the term realism as he uses it, Metz speaks of:

> those moments of truth, of a truth which remains to be defined; . . . it is definitely not some sort of principle of objectivity, some sort of faultless realism which can define the modern cinema, but the aptitude for certain truths, or rather for certain accuracies . . . (p 196).

Metz ends with some remarks about the ' regulated ' cinema, ' a category partly covering what Raymond Bellour calls " le cinema reél " (p 197).[49] Elsewhere, in another footnote, Metz writes:

> the regulated cinema is one of the two branches that spring from a sort of general *realist* trunk which between circa 1940 and 1950 had come to embody the vast majority of the production, when compared to the tendencies towards the *phantastique* during that time.

It becomes clear that the nature of the ' realist ' cinema or ' regulated ' cinema is by no means analysed. Moreover, returning to the same unquestioned a-priori arguments, Metz writes: ' what Godard presents us with . . . is in the *final analysis* a *narrative* with a huge amount of *a-filmic world* caught in its mazes ' and ' in Godard there is *always a story* ' [Metz's italics] (p 200). The defence of the regulated cinema is clearly a defence of the cinema as representation and of representation as narrative, as narration.

All this does not of course mean that we think that these terms *really* characterise the films of Godard or Resnais. To qualify the cinema (or a particular film) as realist *from the outset* amounts to denying oneself all opportunities for comprehension or analysis. Finally, one can understand why Metz is able to speak of ' great storytellers ' (' that specific *temperament* which makes great storytellers ' p 221, of the ' originality of *creative artists* ' (p 105) or what allows him to state that ' a film is entirely a world-seen-by ',[50] ' it is completely the correlate of a *look* '[51].

To say that to tell stories is the specific characteristic of the cinema, is to say the same about film-makers. To think the film as a totality subjected to a look amounts to believing in the transcendance of the creator-subject, thus clearly pointing towards a link with phenomenology. It also amounts to believing in representation because, in the words of Francois Wahl: ' to speak of representation is to privilege the look (*le regard*) '. It is, literally, to prevent oneself from *looking any closer.*

I.B5 SEMIOLOGY AND NARRATION (FOUNDATION OF THE SEMIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE CINEMA AS A STUDY OF NARRATION)

We have now arrived at the only possible conclusion: the semiology of the cinema will be a semiology of narration. Metz authorises himself this founding gesture on these four ' bases ':
1. *The origins as foundation:*

We know that in those few years preceding and following the Lumière brothers' invention, in 1895, critics, journalists and the pioneers themselves held fairly widely diverging views as to the *social function* they attributed to or predicted for the new piece of equipment: means of conservation or archivation, auxiliary technology for research in and teaching of the sciences such as botany or surgery, a new form of journalism, etc. That the cinema could become first of all a machine for telling stories, that was not *really* expected. The encounter between *cinema and narrativity* represents an important but not inevitable or fatal fact. However, it is not accidental either: it is an historical and social fact, a fact of civilisation . . . a fact which in its turn conditions the evolution of the cinema as a semiological reality (p 96).

2. *Foundation by the consecration of a generally used term:* ie a term consecrated by Metz. When talking of *film,* Metz adds: ' accepting this term in the sense that we understand it today when used without a determinant: narration of a certain extent etc ' (p 98). Elsewhere he writes: ' the fictional feature film, which, by a kind of pregnant use of the term, is generally just referred to as a film (p 96) '. As according to Metz the cinema only consists of narration, the semiological study of the cinema will be nothing more than a study of cinematic narration.
3. *Technique as foundation:* ' Still today, the so-called filmic procedures are in fact filmico-narrative procedures. This in our opinion, justifies the priority the semiologist must give in his work to the narrative film '. And Metz deems it useful to add: ' a priority which, of course, should not become an exclusivity ' (p 99).
4. *' Methodological urgency ' as foundation:*

a first choice is presented to the film semiologist: must the

corpus consist of ' feature films ', *in other words* of narrative films, or, on the contrary, of short films, documentaries, technological films, pedagogical films, publicity films, etc . . . (p 96).

One can see that it is indeed impossible to choose: what Metz calls ' a choice ' is in fact the obligation to turn our attention to narration. It seems to us that the assimilation feature films = narrative films is a bit radical and hasty; ' non-narrative films ' would only be shorts, documentaries, publicity films, etc . . .! All one can do is proclaim astonishment or recognise the re-emergence of the unquestioned a-priori argument which here takes the form (or the excuse) of a ' methodological urgency ': ' there is a hierarchy of the important aspects of film (or better, there are methodological urgencies) which lead one to privilege – at least at the beginning – the study of the narrative film ' (p 96). Elsewhere, Metz writes: ' to examine fiction films is therefore to go directly to the heart of the problem ' (p 97).

Following this train of thought, Metz distinguishes: ' two separate projects which cannot replace each other:

- on the one hand the semiology of the narrative film such as the one we are attempting;
- on the other hand the structural analysis of *narrativity* itself, ie of the narrative regardless of the vehicles which carry it (film, book, etc) It is the narative before the intervention of " narrational supports " ' (p 144).

As an example, Metz cites Claude Brémond. In this way we have:

the story (' narrated events ') < is a *signifier* for the semiology of narrativity (C Brémond)

the story (' narrated events ') < is a *signified* for the semiology of the narrational vehicles (C Metz)

From that, it is possible to draw only one conclusion, summarised by Metz in these terms: ' as Cohen-Séat points out, the *language of the film* will always be already inscribed in actions and passions which matter to us ' (p 448). In other words, to Metz the *cinematic language* is never anything but *narration*. Such an idea cannot but raise a whole lot of questions.[52]

1.c *The Cinema: Langue or Language?*

' The whole problem of the semiology of film is already posed by the expression " cinematic language " itself ' Christian Metz (Essais, p 95).

' It (the cinema) is clearly a kind of language ' Christian Metz (Essais, p 47).

' The cinema is a language; the cinema is infinitely different from verbal language ' Christian Metz (Essais, p 51).

I.C1 IMAGE/SIGN/MONEME/UTTERANCE/SENTENCE/(WRITING)

Metz writes: 'The image is always – firstly an image: a perceptually " literal " reproduction of the spectacle of which it is the signifier. It *is* sufficiently what it shows in order not to have to *signify* it, taking this term in the sense of ' *signum facere* ', of especially fabricating a sign. The filmic image has a great many characteristics which oppose it to the arbitrary, conventional, codified form most usually taken by the sign ' (p 79) [Metz's italics]. According to Metz, the image is a signifier cut off from its signified, or more accurately, a signifier whose signified is exiled to the diegesis, *is* the diegesis. The effect of the signifier is thus to reproduce the signified in a ' quasi-tautological ' manner, to use Barthes's formulation.[53] The relationship of the ' thing ' signified and the signifying image is here no longer an arbitrary one, but one of ' quasi-identity ' (Barthes). Inasmuch as it constitutes the level of denotation the image has a signifier and a signified, but the relationship is no longer arbitrary as in the case of the linguistic sign.[54]

The ' shot ', Metz says, does not correspond to the *word;* and ' five radical differences between the filmic shot and the linguistic word can easily be distinguished:

1. ' shots are infinite in number – unlike the words of a *langue,* but like the utterances which can be formulated by (in) a *langue;*
2. ' shots are the invention of the film-maker – unlike words (which pre-exist in a lexicon), but like utterances (which are in principle the invention of the speaker);
3. ' the shot presents the receiver with a quantity of undefined information, unlike the word. From this standpoint the shot is not even the equivalent of the sentence, but of *the complex utterance of indefinite length.* (For example: how does one describe a film shot fully, using a natural language?);
4. ' the shot is an actualised unit, a unit of the discourse – unlike the word (which is a purely virtual unit of the lexicon), but like the utterance which always refers to the real (even when it is interrogative or imperative). The image of a house does not signify ' a house ' but ' here is a house '. The image integrates into itself a kind of index of actualisation just by the fact that it figures in a film;
5. ' the extent to which a shot takes its meaning through a paradigmatic opposition to other shots which could have appeared at the same point in the chain is only very slight (because these other shots are infinite in number); the word on the other hand is always

 part of several relatively organised semantic fields. The clarification of the units which are present by the units which are absent, the major linguistic phenomenon – plays only a small part in the cinema ' (p 118).

' Thus each image, far from being equivalent to a moneme, or even a word, corresponds far more closely to the complete *utterance* ' (p 33).

However, this correspondence is one of resemblance only, and it would be false to say that the shot is equivalent to the utterance, for there are major differences between the linguistic utterance and the shot. In the last analysis, even the most complex utterance *can be reduced* to discrete elements (words, morphemes, phonemes, pertinent traits) whose number and nature are fixed. The filmic shot does of course also result from a *combination* of several elements (. . .) but these elements are indefinite in number and nature, like the shot itself. Analysing a shot means going from a non-discrete whole to smaller non-discrete wholes. It is possible to *de-compose* a shot, but not to reduce it. The only assertion that can be made therefore is that a shot is *less dissimilar* from an utterance than from a word, but does not therefore resemble an utterance (p 119).

Metz had been led to compare the image to the sentence. To do so he had to distinguish between different types of sentences: ' the term sentence here . . . designates the *oral sentence* and not the " grammarians' written sentence " (a complex utterance composed of multiple assertions contained between two strong punctuation marks) ' (p 170). The cinematic image became ' a kind of equivalent of the spoken sentence but not of the written sentence ', and Metz goes on:

This does not preclude – though this is a different problem – certain shots or groups of shots from corresponding additionally to sentences of the ' written ' type. In many ways the cinema evokes the impression of a writing much more than it does spoken language. But at a certain point in the sectioning off of units, the shot – ' a finite assertive utterance ' as Benveniste would say – is equivalent to the oral sentence (p 70 note 2).

Elsewhere Metz writes: ' the cinema is equivalent to a " sentence " more through its assertive status than through its quantity of meaning (a notion which is too difficult to apply, particularly in the cinema): the image is *always actualised* ' (p 72). But in a note *added* to the second version of his text, Metz returns to the idea that ' this distinction between two kinds of sentences today seems less important . . .'.

From a specifically cinematic point of view it is in any case impossible to say that the ' shot ' corresponds to *one* sentence or

several sentences, and so the question whether these sentences would be ' written ' or ' spoken ', ' simple ' or ' complex ' is therefore extremely secondary. All that can be said is simply that *the shot . . . is situated . . . on the level of the sentence.* Since the shot *is not made up of words,* it could ' correspond ' to the sentence only *externally,* ie in terms of its relationship to the discourse (p 70 note 2).

Elsewhere, in an additional note (to the second version of his text) Metz rejects the concept of the *seme* in connection with the ' shot ' (but also, he says, in connection with the cinema); he takes seme in the sense which Eric Buyssens and Luis J Prieto give the term: ' units of signification of the order of the utterance encountered in various signifying systems; the utterance proper thus becomes the specifically linguistic form of the seme '.[55] Similarly

it would be hazardous to try to assimilate the shot to the *taxeme* in Louis Hjelmslev's sense,[56] but it is possible to decide that in the cinema it constitutes a *minimum segment* of signification (an expression adopted from André Martinet). For it requires at least one shot to make a film or a part of a film, just as a linguistic utterance could not consist of less than a phoneme . . . While the shot cannot be the minimum element of filmic signification(since a single shot presents us with a number of facts) it is at least the minimum element of the filmic chain (pp 108-109).

Summarising this paragraph as a whole: the image or shot does not correspond to the linguistic *sign,* nor to the *word.* It is less dissimilar from the *utterance* than from the word, but it does not correspond to the *utterance.* Similarly, it does not correspond either to the *seme* in Buyssens' sense, or to the *taxeme* in Hjelmslev's sense. Its relationship to the sentence is one of exteriority; one can say that it is situated ' on the level ' of the sentence. This last characteristic allows Metz to draw a parallel between ' film and writing ', or ' better still ' the novel: ' The fiction film seems to me closer to the novel than to the poem ' (p 203), ' Cinematic language is closest to writing '.[57]

This paragraph which we have presented without comment inscribes itself into a chain – a series of words in which each one bars the preceding one: sign/word/utterance/taxeme/sentence. At its end it opens out into a comparison with writing and the novel, as follows:

fiction film ——————— novel
cinematic language ——————— writing

that is,

For Metz, just as cinematic language merges with fiction (narration), so writing merges with the novel. Cinematic language is solely narration *like* writing is solely the novel. The same presupposition we mentioned before. Here it further confuses the line of argument in an attempt to obliterate the difficulty. But it returns. A cinematic language which is no more than narration must inevitably find it hard to establish itself in relation to linguistics, *langue* or language.

I.C2 LANGUE AND THE DOUBLE ARTICULATION

Metz stresses A Martinet's assertion that 'one can only speak of *langue* where there is double articulation', and the cinema has nothing which would correspond to the double articulation of *langue:*

1. '*There is nothing in it which corresponds to the second articulation,* not even speaking metaphorically' (p 67). As we know, the second articulation sections the discourse into units of expression without a corresponding content (ie, 'it operates on the level of the signifier, but not on the level of the signified', p 67). These units share in the form, but not the meaning; they are *distinctive units – phonemes* which do not have their own signification. Their very existence implies a great distance between 'content' and 'expression'. In the cinema, this gap is too narrow. The signifier is an image, the signified is what-the-image-represents . . .; consequently it is impossible to section the signifier without the signified itself being cut into isomorphic fragments. Hence the impossibility of a second articulation – the cinema is a much too 'intrinsic' semy, to use Buyssens' terminology (p 68). Metz continues:

> To sum up, the *universality* of the cinema is a phenomenon which has two faces. A positive face: the cinema is universal because visual perception varies much less than does idiom throughout the world. A negative face: the cinema is universal because it escapes the second articulation. The unity of these two observations needs to be stressed: a visual spectacle entails. adherence to the signified on the part of the signifier which in fact makes their disconnection at any point impossible and therefore rules out a second articulation.[58]

2. *The cinema has nothing which corresponds to the first articulation.* The first articulation sections the discourse into units of expression which have a corresponding content. These are the *significative* units or *monemes.*

Whatever may have been said on the subject, the cinema does not have ' words '. It does not, except momentarily and in some sense by chance, obey the first articulation. It should be pointed out that the virtually insurmountable problems that attempts to establish the ' syntax ' of the cinema run into are to a large extent due to an initial confusion: the image is defined as a word, the sequence as a sentence. But the image (at least in the cinema) is equivalent to one or more sentences, and the sequence is a complex segment of the discourse (p 70).

Paraphrasing this rather more cryptically, Metz writes:

the cinema is not a *langue* because it runs counter to three important characteristics of the linguistic fact: a langue is a *system* of *signs* aimed at *inter-communication*. The definition has three elements. The cinema on the other hand, like all arts, and because it is an art, is a ' one-way ' communication. In fact it is a means of *expression* rather than of communication; it is only partly a system; and finally, it uses very few genuine signs.[59]

Metz also thought the (cinematic) *langue*/(cinematic) language relationship in terms of the Code/Message (for *Langue/Parole*) opposition accepted by Martinet (and rejected by Hjelmslev and Guiraud). But he was led to abandon the formulation in ' such strictly antagonistic terms ' (p 56).
To sum up:

Langue	Language (here: cinematic language)
system signs inter-communication (code)	no double articulation (weak paradigmatic oppositions) few genuine signs expression (message-*parole*)

I.C3 CINEMATIC LANGUAGE AND ' CINEMATIC LANGUAGE '/CODES ' SCHEMAS OF SENTENCES '.

The cinema is thus a language and not a *langue*, but ' it differs infinitely from verbal language ' (p 54). Defining cinematic language means defining ' cinematic specificity ' and this definition Metz

 says, must be made on two levels: filmic discourse and discourse in images.

1.

as a totality, the *filmic discourse* is specific through its composition. The film, as the superior instance, brings together primary ' languages ' and is thereby forcibly projected upwards into the sphere of art in which context it is free to become a specific language once again. The film-totality can only be a language if it is already art.

2.

But within this totality there is a kernel which is more specific still and, unlike the other elements which make up the filmic world, it does not exist in a separate state in other arts. This is the *discourse in images*. Here the perspective is inverted: the sequence of images is a language *first*, but a language in the figurative sense, because far too different from the language we speak (p 64).

Metz continues:

neither the filmic discourse nor the discourse in images is a *langue*. As language or art, the *discourse in images* is an open system and given its non-discrete basic units (ie images), its too natural intelligibility, and the lack of distance between the signifier or signified – a system that is not easily codifiable. As art or language, the constructed film is a more open system still, presenting us directly with whole portions of meaning (p 65).

Statements like these, following on others on this level, demonstrate the difficulty involved in giving the cinema the status of language in the full sense of that word. ' The most important aspects of the cinema operate between language and art ', writes Metz (p 65); ' the *cinema as totality* (filmic discourse) is a site where many signifying systems are superimposed and interwoven, cinematic language being only one of them ' (p 114).

The difficulty of talking in a simple way about the cinema as a language is due to the existence of *codes* inscribed into the filmic discourse (the cinema as a totality). Metz returns to this problem of codes (which he also calls ' signifying systems ') several times:

many of the misunderstandings and disputes on this subject stem from the fact that no adequate attempt has been made to draw up a reasonably full list of these *heterogeneous and overlaid codes* [my italics] which function conjointly in all cultural activity of any importance; or to elucidate the precise organisation of their interaction (p 114).

Metz has attempted such a classification. He makes a distinction between ' the *cultural* codes and the *specialised* codes '*:

1.

' *the cultural codes* ' define the culture of every social group. They are so all-pervasive and ' assimilated ' that their users generally regard them as natural, and a constituent part of humanity itself (though they are obviously *products* since they vary in space and time). The manipulation of these codes does not require any special training ' (p 114).

Within the cultural codes it is possible to distinguish:
– ' perception itself (the system of constructing " space ", " figures " and " backgrounds " etc) insofar as this already constitutes a received system of intelligibility which varies according to the " culture " in question ' (the perpetual code).
– ' the recognition and identification of the visual or aural objects which appear on the screen; that is, the ability (also cultural and received) to manipulate correctly the denoted material presented to the " culture " in question ' (the perceptual code).
– ' the set of " symbolisms " and connotations of various orders which are associated with objects (or with relationships between objects) outside the film – that is, in the culture '.
– ' the set of major narrative structures (in Claude Brémond's sense) which are current outside films (but also in films) within each culture ' (p 67 note 2).

2. ' *the specialised codes* ' which, on the other hand, concern more specific and more restricted social activities, present themselves more explicitly as codes and require a special training, the degree of which varies from code to code. With cinema, the training required is fairly ' slight '.

These ' specialised ' codes are constituted by the ' set of specifically cinematic systems ' which organise the various elements, presented to the spectator by the four preceding instances, into a specific discourse (p 68, note). Therefore ' the signifying figures which are by nature cinematic ' . . . (ie montage, camera movement, optical effects, ' film rhetoric ', the interaction of visual and aural elements, etc) constitute the ' specialised codes ' (p 115).

A revealing discursive link is established here by the phrases ' outside films, ie in the culture '/' outside films within each culture ' – they are the same. The cultural ' outside ' they posit is rather disturbing. Let's look at the set from which they seem to derive – that is, the ' cultural codes '. According to Metz these are four in number: ' perceptual code '/' iconic code '/' symbolic code '/' nar-

* See also Eco's division in *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no 3, 1972 **Editorial Note.**

 rative code '. To us there seems to be a twofold confusion here: On the one hand, while the ' iconic ', ' symbolic ' and ' narrative ' codes clearly belong to the filmic discourse, the ' perceptual code ' *cannot* be inscribed *into* that discourse. It is simply the act of reading the film (and one may well ask how this involves a ' code '). As such it concerns only the viewer.
On the other hand, defining the ' iconic code ' as the ' *recognition* ' and *identification* of visual objects ' also risks limiting this to the viewers' concern alone.

The viewer is none other than the *subject;* that is, the subject viewing (the film) with his ' perception ' and his ' capacity ' for ' recognition ' and ' identification '. Let's attempt a preliminary general distribution of these terms in their exact *location,* ie in the filmic discourse:

- the symbolic code is inscribed into the signifier of connotation;
- the narrative code is inscribed into the signified of denotation;
- the iconic code (and not the ' recognition ' and ' identification ' practised by a particular subject) is inscribed into the signifier of denotation;

Although schematised, this distribution does not avoid ideological errors:

– the ' specialised codes ' have only one term in Metz's outline: they are ' cinematic systems ', ' signifying figures '. Looking at this grouping – montage, camera movement, optical effects, film rhetoric, interaction of visual and aural elements – the classification seems to us totally heterogeneous. Only optical effects, film rhetoric, the interaction of the visual and the aural, and montage can be said to be *inscribed* into the filmic discourse. Camera movement only finds itself here because of a yawning gap in the classification which ends on an ' etc '.
Let's attempt a general division of these terms:

– ' film rhetoric ' is inscribed into the signifier of connotation;
– ' optical effects ' are inscribed into both denotation and connotation and the same applies to ' montage ' and ' the interaction of visual and aural elements '.

The two aspects of this distribution (the terms it inscribes and those it excludes) give us grounds for arguing that Metz's classification is not homogeneous.

But is it really a *classification?* Metz tells us that the ' specialised codes ' *organise* into a *specific discourse* the various elements provided by the four preceding instances, that is, the so-called ' cultural ' codes. The ' specific ' discourse in question here is therefore simply ' the set of *cinematic* systems '. Thus we learn that as a ' specific ' discourse film simply *organises* a material, a supply

which pre-exists in the cultural system . . .

The film is thus the *storehouse* of preliminary *documentation* – sociological, psychological and cultural documents. The relevance of our correction to the table of ' cultural codes ' now becomes clear, for what Metz put forward here was not a view of codes *inscribed* into the discourse, but ex-scribed, if we may coin a term. What he was discussing was not an *inscription*, but an *ex-scription:* the cultural codes in question are nothing more than *cultural* codes. On the other hand, the ' specialised codes ', according to Metz, ' concern *social activities* '.

In what sense are ' the interactions between visual and aural elements ' or ' optical effects ', ' social activities '? This is simply playing with sociological terms: the so-called ' specialised ' codes are specialised in ' culturalisation '. They are *cultural* codes to the same degree as the cultural codes: that is, they are codes of the *culture*. The ' classification ' is therefore simply rhetoric and here it acts as a mask for an *a priori* or pre-supposition. The film is simply the discourse of a cultural and chaotic primary discourse which it repeats and organises. *Representation* is here an assembling of debris and fragments, an assembling which has to be learnt. The ' classification ' conceived on the basis of a primary separation between training (the specialised codes) and non-training (the cultural codes) opens up to receive the *subject* which is its foundation. By concentrating overmuch on the cultural codes the discussion succeeds in ignoring their reality. It seems to us necessary to distinguish between:

– cultural codes which can be considered as signifying systems, whose analysis has been initiated by Olivier Burgelin (cf ' Echange et Déflation dans la Système Culturel ', *Communications* II).
– and these *same codes* when they are taken over by a *metalanguage* (the cinema) which provides them with a complex series of signifieds which cannot be detached, separated or extracted from the film as if film were merely an envelope. (What Badiou called ' separable ideological statements ' do of course exist, but this *separation* is a concept which needs to be analysed, whose *importance* in the cinema needs to be analysed – and which is not to be confused with its antonym, *extraction*).

From the presence of these codes and the problems it entails ' it is clearly possible to conclude ', writes Metz, ' that the cinema is not a language, or at least that it is one only in much too figurative a sense ' (p 91).

He returns to this idea in another text: ' at the present stage of linguistic and semiological research, the expression ' cinematic language ' can only have a figurative sense and should always be used in inverted commas to indicate a conventional term '.[60]

Metz is therefore obliged to find other terms: he speaks of the cinema as a ' *flexible system* ' (p 91), or a ' *flexible semy* ',[61] or

 again of ' cinematic semiotics ', [62] later clarifying that ' each semiotics or semy is to the field of semiology what each *langue* is to language. Semiology can study both strict, strongly codified systems, and more flexible systems called semy; or both isological and non-isological systems, to use Barthes' distinction.[63]

These new terms are necessary because, Metz says, ' in the study of non-verbal means of expression one is often led by the very nature of the material under consideration to practice a linguistics which is related neither to *langue* nor really to *parole*, but rather to discourse in Benveniste's sense ' (p 92).

> Thus between on the one hand *spoken words* – which are pure ' sign-events ' incapable of being reproduced twice over and therefore impossible to study scientifically – and on the other, *langue* (whether human *langue* or the even more systematic formalised *langues* of machines), an organised system in which everything is inter-related – there is room for a study of ' sign designs ' (Buyssens), transphrastic combinations, ' writings ' in the Barthesian sense, etc . . . In short, there is room for the study of *types of parole* (p 95) – [my italics, except the last one].

So much so that ' the whole problem of semiology of film is already posed by the expression " cinematic language " itself ' (p 95).

II. Method

' Action (science, method)', Francis Ponge.

' What needs to be understood is the fact that films are understood ', Christian Metz (Essais, p 145).
' One cannot study cinema by doing without the cinema ', Christian Metz (*Critique* No 214, p 235).

' The *semiology* of the cinema is a semiology of the *cinema* ', Christian Metz (Essais, p 64).

We will now turn to the study of the method of semiology, examining the double relationship it always deals with. Its regulated interplay, in that it reveals and founds certain *truths*, certain decisive elements, also manifests itself as a method involving rigour, read also: *restraint*.

It is therefore a rigour accompanied or *preceded* by a restraint which we intend to discuss, but equally, the scene where they are revealed: the double relationship sytagm/paradigm – denotation/connotation.

II.A *syntagm-paradigm*

' each of these two classes of co-ordination calls for some special remarks ', de Saussure (*Course in General Linguistics*, p 124).

' The very richness and exuberance of the syntagmatic combinations that film allows should be studied . . . and opposed to the surprising poverty of its paradigmatic resources ', Christian Metz (*Essais*, p 72).

' The semiology of the cinema may well find itself centered on the syntagmatic relationships, rather than on the paradigmatic ones ', Christian Metz (*Essais*, p 102).

' The syntagm presents itself in the form of a " chain " (in the flow of speech for example)', Roland Barthes (*Elements of Semiology*, p 64).

II.A1 SYNTAGMATIC/(SYNTAX)

' Syntagmatic considerations much more than any paradigmatic analyses are the focus of the problem of filmic denotation ', Metz writes (p 104).

Metz's semiology is a *semiology of denotation*. We will have to come back to this remark. For the moment we will simply note that the syntagmatic relationships in Metz's view – besides being confined to the level of denotation alone – correspond exactly to narration; his concern is always with a ' *grande syntagmatique* of the narrative film ' (p 104). The linkage of the syntagmatic chain is the narration. Metz adds that this syntagmatic is a *syntax* (p 72) – ' All syntax is syntagmatic, an idea which should be given some thought by all those concerned with the cinema '. The semiology of the cinema is the reading-reconstruction of a syntax (syntagmatic).

Any specifically filmic syntagmatic event implies an association between at least two motifs which figure in two images (montage), or in the same image (camera movement, or even static implication) (p 217).

It seems that here once again we have the *same* presupposition: the film is narration, narration is the film.

In the first place Metz envisages the syntagmatic system as a force, as an absolute necessity *de facto* and *de jure*. In order to achieve this he resorts to a twofold procedure (though unnamed in this context): the logic of implication, current of induction. In fact, by their ' effective ' *presence* and the *effect* of their ' presence ', they allow Metz to envisage the syntagm (read *narration*) as obligatory. Syntagm because always already narration (and vice versa).

In the second place: insofar as the syntagmatic relationships belong to the level of denotation, seeing them as a syntax must mean rejecting the effectiveness of what for us is the true cinematic syntax, ie the connotation. Metz provides another example of this

when he writes: 'A cinematic syntax does not exist. To me it seems that on the contrary, while there may not be a syntax, there is at least a *grande syntagmatique* of the narrative film'.[64] Rejecting a syntax for the level of denotation is therefore always a rejection of *any* syntax, which means a rejection of the connotative syntax. This *obliteration* of the connotation can only be sustained by an identical gesture towards the paradigmatic relationships: The *grande syntagmatique . . . at the same time constitutes a paradigmatic* . . . we are therefore dealing with paradigms of syntagms' (p 137 – Metz's italics). Or again: 'The *grande syntagmatique*, far from excluding any paradigmatic, on the contrary constitutes one . . .'[65]

The point is not of course to reject these extremely obvious 'paradigms of syntagms' but to reflect on the *nature* of the paradigms of connotations, far more important in their way. They are not present in the chain of a syntagm as possible substitutions or that 'limited series of types of combinations' which 'present the film-maker with a choice at every point in his film' (p 137).

II.A2 THE PARADIGMATIC RELATIONSHIPS

Thus Metz can write: 'The possibility cannot be ruled out – though it is too early to affirm it absolutely – that *the paradigmatic of the large units* alone constitutes the most clearly defined aspect of the total paradigmatic of "cinematic languages"' (p 138 – Metz's italics). Metz is thus led to distinguish between different kinds of filmic paradigm:

1. 'Camera movements, internal structures of the "shot", dissolves and other optical processes, types of relationships between image and sound, etc . . .' which are connected with

> already fairly 'large' syntagmatic elements: ie *the sequence of shots*, as a whole, *the shot*, as a whole, *the relationship between 'motifs'* (ie the relationship between two or more visual/aural 'motifs' isolated from the total shot, but themselves taken en bloc with their various perceptual aspects), *the relationship between aspects of motifs*. [Metz's italics].[65]

It will be noted that this first type of paradigms is completely subjected to the narration. Insofar as the narration is always there, it is not possible, it seems, for this type of paradigm to contribute to any enrichment or development. These are therefore simply paradigms of punctuation, where punctuation becomes something added – an ornament or reinforcement of the narration.

2. 'The types of relationship between speech and image, between speech and the rest of the sound track (music and "real" noise), etc . . .' According to Metz, 'this level largely eludes the theory of the cinema' (p 139).

3.
Among the *other* facts of cinematic paradigmatic relationships which are available for analysis, the majority pertain to *differential* analyses, in other words analyses which assume the ' filmic fact ' to be more or less given and engage in exploring its particular manifestations:
these may be:

- different *films* as singular ' works ';
- different *parts of films* as singular passages;
- or different kinds of *groups of films* (still singular) which correspond to what is called: ' the film-maker's *œuvre* ', the cinematic *genre* (the Western, etc . . .), the ' style ' of a period, a leading country, a school, etc . . .

These researches, Metz says, are distinct from the analysis of cinematic language proper. The latter constitutes an autonomous signifying system, and each film (or part of a film, or group of films) in turn constitutes another one (p 139).

When Metz says that ' researches of this kind ' are ' distinct from the analysis of cinematic *language* ' he is saying that they are distinct from the analysis of cinematic *narration*, in other words, that they hold no interest for him.

The problem of ' *genre* ', (like that of ' *style* ') relates directly to the level of denotation. What Metz is rejecting – we repeat – is (the analysis of) connotation.

4. The last type of paradigm consists of ' largely cultural paradigms ' which can ' only be the concern of a general semantics, a semiology of cultures or a semiology of objects ' (p 104).
Thus when it reaches the smaller components of the film, the semiology of the cinema meets its limits and sees its competence vanish. Like it or not, one is thrust back among the innumerable currents of culture and the confused murmur of innumerable other voices; the symbolic of the human body, the language of objects, the system of colour, the meaning of clothes, the discourse of the landscape . . .

and, according to Metz, films simply ' partially remodel ' these different ' paradigms ' (p 142).

This calls for a fuller analysis. A study which took as its object a genre or a rhetoric (ie the complex structure of the signifiers of connotation) would have to test whether, as Metz says, such systems are simply partially ' remodelled ' and remain extra-cinematic (' cultural '). To us it seems on the contrary that this is possibly not always the case.

These different types of cinematic paradigms are summarised

 in the following table:

1. paradigms of large units (paradigms of syntagms).	narration/description
2. paradigms of 'processes' (*mise en scène*)	camera movement / internal structure of the shot/dissolves /optical processes, etc.
3. paradigms of speech	relationships: speech/image-speech/soundtrack
4. 'differential' paradigms	'*oeuvres*'/passages of films/ genres/style
5. 'cultural' paradigms	symbolic of the human body/ language of objects/system of colours/meaning of clothes/ discourse of the landscape etc . . .

Metz takes into consideration the first type of paradigm (paradigms *of syntagms*) which is the only one that his method can account for. He ignores the other paradigms, particularly those which derive from 'differential' analyses and the so-called 'cultural' paradigms – the true paradigms of connotation. Metz's semiology is therefore a *semiology of denotation* and for him 'much more than any paradigmatic considerations syntagmatic analyses are the focus of the problems of filmic denotation' (p 104).

It remains for us here to try to understand the effectiveness of a twofold gesture which at this point dictates the whole scheme of Metz's discourse:

(a) On the one hand the *absolute rejection of any paradigmatic:* 'one would look in vain among the images of film for any true associative series or strict semantic fields' (p 74 – this was the argument practised in the *first version* of the text). Metz talked

of the ' richness, even exuberance of the syntagmatic combinations ' in order ' to oppose it to the surprising poverty of the paradigmatic resources ' (p 72). This gesture moves from the cinema's not being a *langue*, ie not having a double articulation, to assert that the cinema could not *a priori* possess significative paradigmatic oppositions (between words) and distinctive paradigmatic oppositions (between phonemes).
(b) At a later date and chiefly through *additional notes* and *corrections* to the second version of the text (note 1, p 72, 3, p 75) Metz reintroduced the paradigmatic.

But we can be assured that this *return* is no more than a new figure of negation:
– Metz turns back to the (syntagmatic) richness, exuberance/ (paradigmatic) poverty opposition:

I no longer feel that these two aspects of the problem[68] can really be ' opposed '. For as was said – but not clearly enough – in the text reprinted here, they are not situated on the same level. It is in connection with the *image* that one can speak of ' paradigmatic poverty ', and in connection with the *combinations of images* that one can speak of ' syntagmatic richness '.

But what should have been noted at the same time was that the effect of the existence of a number of types of image combinations was to create (still at the level of the *discourse*) a specific paradigmatic constituted precisely by the total system of these different syntagms.

The syntagmatic and the paradigmatic are by definition correlatives of each other (p 73, note).

So Metz can write:

This is precisely why I am less sceptical on the question of the paradigmatic of the film than I was when I wrote that article. What I did not see was that a great part of the paradigmatic of the film has to be sought *in the syntagmatic itself* [Metz's italics] (p 75).

Thus the paradigmatic order is reintroduced in the guise of *a paradigmatics of the syntagmatic order.*

– Metz then introduces a second observation according to which:

the existence of different kinds of paradigmatic associations between *the images themselves* is not excluded, since different social groups all have cultural ' symbolisms ' which also relate to iconography. The point is simply that these paradigms are not specifically linked to cinematic language (p 73 note 1).

To use the word ' simply ' (and its correlative ' specifically ') seems

to raise problems. To want to reduce a paradigmatic of this kind to cultural 'symbolism' (ie 'cultural' paradigms) seems to us rather serious. Such a rejection can only be situated in the *system* /narration opposition. and, of course, to establish the first term would mean displacing the articulation or deconstructing it, and refusing narration its 'function of authority'.

Returning *anew* to the paradigms of the image, Metz writes: 'The great film-makers have avoided the paradigm. Or at least certain paradigms' (example: white cowboy/black cowboy=good/bad, p 75). One could say that the great film-makers (and we leave Metz the responsibility of naming them) have avoided paradigms of the dualist, 'psychologist' type. But the paradigm of the image never exists *in itself*, for it is also (and above all) a paradigm of *connotation. On this level,* far from being specifically 'cultural' or 'symbolic', these paradigms seem to us capable of constituting an *object* of study, and possibly of classification (particularly in relation to certain genres: eg the films of Hitchcock or Polanski, horror films, westerns).

II.B *denotation/connotation*

'The cinema is clearly a form of representation' Christian Metz (*Critique* No 217 p 234).

'The semiology of the cinema may be conceived either as a semiology of connotation, or as a semiology of denotation'. Christian Metz (*Essais*, p 99)

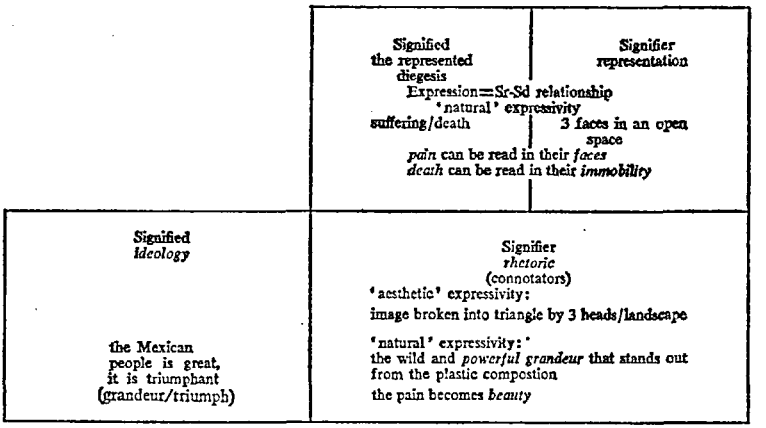
II.B1 THE OPERATION AND ITS SCHEME

We will now give a scheme of the result of the 'operation' (Barthes) of the sectioning (*découpage*) into two levels – denotation/connotation. This is its first version[68]:

	through the logic of implication (linguistic sign) the image designates something other than itself (relation of solidarity) diegesis *Signified* of *denotation* (degree two)	by pure analogy (psychological sign) the image designates itself (The image as analogon) *Signifier* of *denotation* (degree one)
	Signifier of connotation (extra diegetic) symbols and metaphors effects of plastic or rhythmic expressivity (degree three)	

Several observations can be made:
– the diegesis is the signified of denotation and its position remains the same in the second version, as we will see later. Metz's semiology is a sectioning of the signified of denotation (which he calls, as we will see, the analysis of the '*grande syntagmatique*' of the image strip). Certain conclusions will need to be drawn from this;
– the diegesis is envisaged in terms of the 'logic of implication';
– Metz produces a graduated scale: the Signifier of denotation becomes 'degree 1', the Signified of denotation 'degree 2' the Signifier of connotation 'degree 3';
– finally, the Signifier of connotation is envisaged as an extra-diegetic level.

We will now give the full schema. It should be made clear, however, that Metz was not very interested in following up this kind of operation, ie in revealing the links that exist between denotation and connotation. Only denotation, or more accurately, the signified of denotation has some importance. But this is not the place to re-examine his founding of the semiological analysis of the cinema as an analysis of narration. [example: a static shot from Eisenstein's *Que Viva Mexico:* three peasants buried up to their necks in the ground Editorial Note.]



Observations:

1. Metz writes: '*two* languages co-exist in this image since there are two signifiers: on the one hand the three faces in an open space; on the other, an open space broken into a triangle by the faces, and two signifieds: on the one hand suffering/death; on the other, grandeur/triumph' (p 83).

2. ' The signifier of the aesthetic language is the signifying totality signified by the primary language (the anecdote, the motif) which it encases ' (p 83). ' Note that, quite normally, the connoted expression is much ' broader ' than the denoted expression and that it is at the same time uncoupled from it ' (p 83).

3. Expression does not designate just the signifier ' but the relationship between a signifier and a signified when that relationship is " intrinsic " '; ' the word *expression* (as opposed to *signification*) is too valuable in work on the cinema to be given the sense of " signifier " for ', Metz says, ' it would lead to some extremely awkward polysemic collisions ' (p 83).

4. On another page Metz also writes:

> all in all, the cinema succeeds in connoting without generally needing *special* (ie separate) connotators, because it has constantly at its disposal that most essential of signifiers of connotation – the choice between several ways of constructing the denotation. Inversely, because *the denotation itself is constructed*, because it is no longer reduced to the automatic operation of iconic anology, and because it is much more than photography, the film is able to connote without the constant help of discontinuous connotators (p 121).

The effect of a statement of this kind is to collapse the value of connotation down to the level of denotation. It is of course true that connotation could not exist without denotation. But Metz is here attempting to make it the double of the diegesis. It is soon accorded the ability to construct the denotation. The connotation involved is in the end just another *preserve* of denotation, its necessary detour. A preserve in the sense of a reservoir of stories, its detour in the sense of a choice of stories. Connotation in this situation becomes a kind of back-stage returned to or crossed (without pause) for costume changes, to catch one's breath or return to the text, ie the narrative.

II.B2 DENOTATION/(SIGNIFICATION/MOTIVATION/ANALOGY)

Cinematic signification ', writes Metz, ' is always *motivated* to a greater or lesser extent, *never arbitrary* '. At the level of denotation, ' the motivation is supplied by *analogy*, that is by the perceptual resemblance between the signifier and the signified. This is true both of the image strip (an image of a dog resembles a dog) and of the sound track (the sound of a gun in a film resembles the real sound of a gun) ' . . . ' Analogy is therefore both visual and aural '. And Metz adds: ' Motivation does not need absolute identity between the signifier and the signified – simple analogy provides a quite adequate motivation ' (p 111).

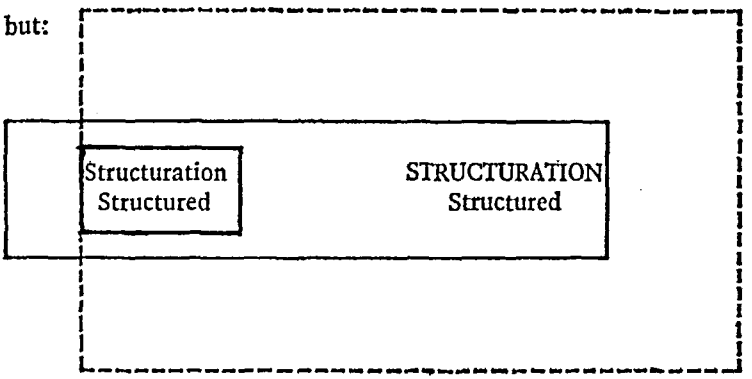
Elsewhere Metz writes: ' The notion of analogy nevertheless has to be handled with care ' (p 194). Analogy itself clearly con-

stitutes a code, and returning on an earlier position, Metz is able to say: ' contrary to what I thought four years ago, it seems quite possible that *analogy is itself coded* ' (p 114). Of the two types of codes he distinguished – ' specialised ' codes and ' cultural ' codes – Metz says: ' The first function *over* photographic and phonologic analogy ' (p 115). His recourse to the ambiguous ' over/under ' label is an indication of the difficulty he has in giving these two codes their precise *location*. And, taking into account the code of analogy, it would in fact be difficult to *situate* the ' cultural ' and ' specialised ' codes, whose problems we have noted earlier. The ' cultural ' and ' specialised ' codes are not specifically cinematic for Metz. He sees these as codes which function *both within* and *outside* the film (in the ' culture '). In our view, what is inscribed between the inside and the outside is in fact a *difference*. Refusing to think this difference theoretically leads Metz to give it a preclusive form – that is, to side-step it. He replaces difference with an absolute origin (constantly at work both within and outside film however without belonging to either of these locations. In other words, he sets up something like a transcendental structure of codes identical with itself both inside and outside the film, whose structuration is variable, changing). What is not specifically cinematic according to Metz is what is structured – this is a constant. The structuration of this constant on the other hand undergoes specific changes when from ' outside ' it becomes ' inside '.

From our point of view this cannot be so. From outside to inside a real qualitative mutation is produced which does not limit itself to changing the structuration, it also changes its location. What is involved is *another* structure which closes off the first by inscribing itself into it (by this we mean inscribing itself into the ideology). Thus not:

Structuration (1)»————»Structuration (1')
Structured————Structured

but:



174 Or, expressing it in terms of an Althusserian problematic: the structure (of the codes *in* the film) is determined by an absence, by a cause which is itself lacking, and which we will call ideology, or more accurately: Economy (Ideology). This lack has an *ersatz* (*tenant lieu* (Lacan)) which is the ideology of the signifieds of connotation.

II.B3 CONNOTATION/(SIGNIFICATION/MOTIVATION/ANALOGY)

' In the cinema ', writes Metz, ' the connoted significations are also motivated. But here the motivation is no longer necessarily a relationship of perceptual analogy. Cinematic connotation is always *symbolic:* the signified motivates the signifier but surpasses it. The notion of *motivated surpassing* can define virtually all filmic connotations ' (p 112).

Elsewhere Metz writes: ' *the partial motivation* of the filmic connotations does not prevent them from fairly frequently bringing about codifications and conventionalisations of varying degrees ' (p 112).

– codification

We now need to look at the relationships which exist between denotation and connotation. Metz writes: ' there can be no completely " aesthetic " usage of the cinema, for even the image which connotes most, cannot avoid also being a photographic designation . . . and the image which denotes most, still connotes to some extent ' (p 85). Denotation and connotation are indissociable, and ' this is all due to the fact that the cinema has a connotation which is homogeneous with its denotation and *like it, expressive* ' (p 85 our italics). Metz comes back to this idea: ' literature is an art of heterogeneous connotation (expressive connotation over non-expressive denotation), while the cinema is an art of homogeneous connotation (*expressive connotation* over expressive denotation) ' (p 82). That ' expressive ' connotation inevitably has some unfortunate *theoretical results.* For example, this statement by Metz:

> Even the most subtle and ingenious filmic connotations rest in the last instance on a simple principle which might be formulated as follows: once it has been given its precise syntagmatic position within the discourse of the film as a whole, a visual or aural motif – or a combination of visual and aural motifs – comes to have a *value greater* than itself, and is *augmented* by a supplement of meaning. But that supplement itself is not completely arbitrary because what the ' motif ' symbolises in this way is a general situation or a general process of which it is in fact a part *within the story* narrated by the film (p 113).

What this gives us may not be so much the ' simple principle ' of the constitution of connotation as the complex principle of its impoverishment and obliteration. The connotative symbol is here always simply the hypertrophying of denotation, or more accurately it is (the organ) lost by denotation in the course of its enlargement. The loss is a loss of a surplus of meaning *delegated* to the connotation where it supplements a *lack* (of meaning). Supplementing means creating a surplus (profiting). Here the supplement is value (+), the excess of value, the value greater than itself which arrives by an *indirect route* to profit on/for another field, another stage (*autre scène*), a back-stage: connotation.

We are now in a position to understand, ie to place precisely in its effective context, a statement like: ' The cinema is by nature condemned to connotation ' (p 80) – one need look no further for the scaffold.

II.B4 SEMIOLOGY OF DENOTATION OR SEMIOLOGY OF CONNOTATION?

' The semiology of the cinema ', Metz writes, ' can be conceived either as a semiology of connotation or as a semiology of denotation ' (p 99).

By now it is clear that Metz has chosen the second path, which allows him to write: ' It is also, indeed firstly, by its processes of denotation that the cinema is a specific language. The notion of diegesis is as important for the semiology of the cinema as the idea of art ' (p 100 – we give Metz full responsibility for that final term).

We can now bring together the whole chain and see how its pieces are linked: representation-narration-diegesis→syntagm-denotation. These are the linch pins of Metz's analysis and the semiology he practices. Each is associated with a whole series of presuppositions which we have examined.

And this explains a statment like the following: ' In the cinema connotation is simply the *form* of the denotation ' (p 120); the sole aim of connotation is ' to bring the *story* more alive and avoid a monotonous and continuous iconic flow ' (p 221). ' The only function of connotation is that of an *addition*, an *ornament*. The code of connotation finds its meaning in the enrichment and *codification* of denotation ' (p 216). Connotation is the ornamentation of the film-discourse, a *rhetoric* in the full sense of the word.

II.C *Syntax/' Grammar '/Rhetoric*

' From the outset film is situated there where rhetoric and poetics are situated ', Christian Metz (*Essais* p 84) . . .

' The theory of tropes is linked to the sciences, which give it its

 foundation and support ', Pierre Fournier (*Manuel Classique pour l'Etude des Tropes*, preface).

We have deliberately condensed this section since the problem calls for argument which would lead us too far. Nevertheless, let's establish the three essential points:

II.C1 SYNTAX IS NOT THE SAME AS SYNTAGM

' Ferdinand de Saussure said that syntax is only part of the syntagmatic order ', (Metz, p 206), ' but every syntactical fact belongs to the syntagmatic class ' (p 72).
Thus we can find the two terms of cinematic syntax according to Metz: *the syntagm proper* (whose classification will be dealt with in the next section); *the paradigms of syntagms:* optical effects, the slowing down or speeding up of film. camera movement, etc (ie ' punctuation ' in general).

II.C2 CINEMATIC ' GRAMMAR '

The idea of a ' cinematic grammar ' is very discredited these days and the general impression seems to be that no such thing exists. But this is because it hasn't been sought in the right place.
The implicit reference has always been to the ' *normative grammar of specific languages* whereas the linguistic and grammatical phenomenon is infinitely more vast and concerns the *fundamental features of all transmission of information* '

and Metz adds: ' This is the task of a *grande syntagmatique* ' (p 145). Film grammar according to Metz is a *grammar of the narrative.* ' Film grammar is not a grammar in the accepted sense of the word, but in fact a set of semantic implications (or subtle grammatical rules) which are partially codified ' (p 154). ' The various orders of codified combinations in use in film ' are what constitute the *content* of that grammar (p 121), but Metz limits his concerns to the ' *grande syntagmatique* of the image-strip (codified combinations and signifiers at the level of the *large* units of the film, and abstractions of the sound and speech elements ') (p 122). Elsewhere Metz writes: ' Film grammar does not consist in prescribing what should be filmed ' (p 218), it is not a ' mechanical and stereotyped grammar ' of the normative kind. And he writes: ' there is the kind of film grammar which rests on the *ambiguous* status of connotation turned mode of denotation, invention turned vehicle ', and this is the ' grammar ' he rejects. But elsewhere he goes on:

To assert that the ' grammar ' of the film is concerned ' first ' with denotation is perhaps only possible if the implications of this ' first ' are immediately clarified. This is a *synchronic* ' first '. What characterises the way filmic combinations function is the

fact that the spectator first understands the literal meaning of the film. On the other hand, from the *diachronic* point of view, filmic combinations were first codified with a view to connotation, not denotation (p 120).

We are thus confronted with the following paradox: while diachronically it was a ' concern with connotation which resulted in the enrichment, organisation and codification of the denotation ' (p 120), connotation was nevertheless completely absorbed by denotation. Metz follows this up by giving ' the example of alternating montage: this was invented to allow for " stylistic " and compositional " effects ", but it became a schema for the intelligibility of the denotation ' (p 120).

II.C3 RHETORIC GRAMMAR

It is well known that the three traditional components of rhetoric are:

Inventio (the search for ideas and ' arguments ')
dispositio (or composition)
elocutio (the choice and arrangement of words)

For Metz the *grande syntagmatique* corresponds to the *dispositio* (ie ' consists in prescribing fixed combinations of non-fixed elements ' . . . ' practically all the figures of " film grammar " . . . obey this principle: thus " alternating montage " (alternation of images=simultaneity of referents) is a combination which is both *codified* (ie the fact of alternation itself) and *signifying* (since this alternation signifies simultaneity)'. But, Metz goes on: ' the duration and internal composition of these combined elements (ie the images which alternate) remains completely free ' (p 119)

This gives rise to what Metz calls ' one of the greatest difficulties of the semiology of the cinema. For this rhetoric is in other respects also *a grammar* and it is in the nature of the semiology of the cinema that rhetoric and grammar should be inseparable ' (p 119). According to Metz, grammar and rhetoric are one: they are facts of *denotation*. The grammar of the narrative is/entails a rhetoric *of the narrative*. He condemns the genuinely connotative rhetoric which he says ' constitutes a *pure rhetoric* which no longer has anything of the grammatical and very little of the cinematic '; or again ' is a set of " cultural stereotypes " ' (p 217). The famous ' cultural ' category (' cultural ' paradigms/' cultural ' codes/ ' cultural ' stereotypes) thus turns up yet again. Such a rhetoric – which in our view is no more *pure* than any other – is not declamatory; it is not a *rhetoric of the narrative*, and in Metzian semiology it could not therefore constitute an object of study since, as we said earlier, that semiology studies ' *cinematic language* ' and this is merged with *narration*.

In this perspective it is clearly the whole notion of film rhetoric which needs to be re-articulated[68].

Analysis from the Greek *analysis = de-composition*
Anatomy from the Greek *anatomia = dissection*

' The cinema is first of all a fact ', Christian Metz (*Essais*, p 13).

' The filmic fact in its most general reality is too often seen as self-evident; and yet there is so much still to be said ', Christian Metz (*Essais*, p 13).

' I am persuaded . . . that the film linguistic enterprise is fully justified ', Christian Metz (*Essais*, p 65).

III.A *de-composition/commutation/sectioning*

' Normative criticism, long superseded in literature, still reigns in the cinema ', Christian Metz (*Critique*, no 214, p 242).
' The signifier/signified distinction serves to differentiate what is always visible from what always has to be sought ', Christian Metz (*Essais*, p 232).

Here, as elsewhere, what makes the sectioning (*découpage*) of the image strip into autonomous segments possible is the *commutation test* – this allows the various combinations to be distinguished from each other and to be enumerated.

Let's look at a ' simple example '. (Metz added a note to the second version of his text which reads: ' I have retained this passage because it gives a simple example of what commutation within the filmic corpus can be, but the factual conclusions presented here no longer correspond to the present state of my analyses on the point under consideration ' p 107, note 51).
Here is the example:

' A first correlation (the presence or absence of pertinent temporal denotation) allows us to pose:

on one side parallel montage (=absence)
on the other alternative montage and alternated montage (=presence)

' Within the second term, another correlation (the nature of the signified of temporal denotation) sets up a divergence between:

alternated montage (signified=simultaneity)
and alternative montage (signified=alternation) ' (p 107).

There have been two versions of the general schema of the *grande syntagmatique:*
– the first version (particularly in ' *La Grande Syntagmatique du Film Narratif* ' *Communications* no 8, 1966) distinguished six principal types: the autonomous shot, the scene proper, the

sequence proper, the descriptive syntagm, the alternating syntagm (with three sub-types: alternated/alternative/parallel), the frequentative syntagm (also with three sub-types: ' fully frequentative/ ' bracketed ' frequentative/semi-frequentative ') (p 137).

This first version, Metz tells us, was ' insufficiently elaborated from a semiological point of view ' (p 137).

– *the second version* (particularly in ' *Un Problème de Sémiologie du Cinéma* ' *Image et Son* no 201, 1967) is the one Metz uses to analyse Jacques Rozier's film *Adieu Philippine.*

It differs from the first on two particular points and on a question of general method:

The particular points: firstly, it became clear that the ' frequentative ' type – which is moreover relatively rare – was not an image combination on the same level as the other types, but rather a specific modality which could affect in some precise circumstances remaining types.[69]

Then the unified status we gave to the ' alternating syntagm ' (which grouped together alternated and parallel syntagms, thereby reducing them to the level of sub-types) today seems rather artificial. For the presence on the screen of images which alternate in series is a fairly common phenomenon which is capable of very varied significations. Therefore, the alternating syntagm and the frequentative syntagm no longer figure as such in our new schema (pp 123-24).

As to the difference in method: it seems clear that the different types and sub-types which made up the first schema and were presented in the purely enumerative form of a list can be re-assembled into a system of successive dichotomies, in accordance with a procedure which is common in linguistics. Such a presentation brings out more clearly the deep structure of the choices which confront the film-maker for each sequence of his film (p 124-125).

[Editorial note: For a schematic representation of the ' Grande Syntagmatique ', see Stephen Heath: *Film/Cinetext/Text,* p 114]. Metz adds: ' This second version of our schema of the *grande syntagmatique* may not be the last ' (p 227).

III.B *Problems*

' The exigences which are known in linguistics under the term *formalisation,* in most cases require that one proceed in stages ', Christian Metz (*Essais* p 137).

' The semiology of the cinema is only just beginning ', Christian Metz (*Essais,* p 134).

' The intention here was to give an idea of the problems ', Christian Metz (*Essais,* p 134).

1. Metz writes:

> It will be observed that the first of our dichotomies – the one which isolates the autonomous shot from the seven remaining types (all the syntagms) – is based on the nature of the *signifier* (ie is this a single shot or several shots). The remainder, which allow distinctions to be made between the syntagms themselves are on the other hand achieved on the basis of the *signified.* Moreover, the autonomous shot may possibly be a class of types rather than a terminal type since it covers fairly numerous and varied constructions of images.
> For these reasons the status of the autonomous shot needs to be looked at again and will entail . . . certain changes in the general system of the schema.

And Metz concludes: ' perhaps there are even *two schemata* . . . one of the syntagm and one of the internal combinations within the autonomous shot ' (p 134). But Metz believes that these two schemata would be homologous and compares the situation to the ' phonological system (which) can be grasped more clearly if one conceives of it as formed by two sub-systems: the " vowels " and the " consonants " ' (p 134).

2. Two observations can be made in connection with the *grande syntagmatique.* Metz writes: ' The *grande syntagmatique* is not immutable, it has its *diachrony.* It clearly evolves much faster than verbal languages ' (p 135). However, it ' nonetheless constitutes a codification which is consistent in each of its synchronic states ' (p 136).

3. A third observation may be made to underline ' the small number of documented combinations of images in comparison to all those which are conceivable ' (p 138).

And elsewhere Metz remarks that it would be possible to draw up ' a table of the presence and absence ' of certain syntagms in connection with a particular film. This could, according to him, ' give indications as to the style of that film ' (p 178).

This seems to us to be an *inversion* of the method. It is the connotation (and particularly the *signifier* of connotation) which helps to establish the style of a film and ' the table of the presence and absence of certain syntagms ' could only serve to support the analysis. The style is constructed by the connotation above all, and this ' stylistic ' code (codification) of connotation in return constructs the famous ' table ': by ' constructs ' we mean: produces and motivates.

4. A fourth series of problems is posed by the impossibility of *situating* with any precision the threshold which separates the elements which are called ' large ' from those called ' small ':

> Does the limit extend beyond the *filmed object* as far as the visual or aural motif? And if it does, how are these ' objects '

to be distinguished and enumerated?
Does the limit extend beyond the *aspect* of the filmed object?
And if so, once again how are these aspects to be counted off?
Does the limit extend beyond the *part* of the filmed object?
How are those parts to be counted off?

And Metz adds: 'there are so many problems which for the moment seem insoluble' (p 140).

III.C *Montage/Mutilation/Dissection/Sectioning*

'The analytical activity which applies to the syntagm is that of *découpage*', Roland Barthes' *Elements of Semiology* (p 58).

'The anatomy of man obviously had to be the basis of human physiology and medicine. And yet prejudice was opposed to the dissection of corpses . . .', Claude Bernard (*Introduction à l'Etude de la Médicine Expérimentale*).

'Turn back the skin and dissect: this is where machines begin', Valéry (*Cahier* B, 1910).

What we propose is turning the whole of this text inside out. To do so would clearly be to reveal the thread and order of its effects. But it would also be designating our own text as an operation or *montage*. It would introduce another series to be gone through and identified. It would be incomplete.

What is involved can be described as locating the marks of the gaps and lacks, in *both* texts. We must return to this.

Going back in the first instance on the ideology of the representation/the representation as ideology – what we called the (necessary) 'presupposition' in connection with Metz. The presupposition is both the primary world to be represented and that ideology of representation.

Going back then on the narration. For Metz, cinema and narration are one, just as narration and cinematic language are one. Narration is never anything but itself, it is always identical to itself, a full and *complete* presence whose other is always itself. It could never *undergo* a *mutilation*, like that of montage for example. For to operate 'montage' means to mutilate. The 'editing (montage) table' is a mutilation table, a *dissecting* table. Narration must remain entire, it must not be opened or *cut open;* it must be a perfect neurotic flow to be maintained and protected, a generalised fluxus of neurosis. To cut up the film is permissible for that which is cut is never the film, but its writing which preexists as the written form of the *narrative* – the *scenario*. A semiology of the script into large autonomous segments is also the connected, linear play of the simulacra of the scenario. To section in this way is always to re-section, *practice* the *second* cut which

turns out to be the *same*. On the other hand to operate *montage*, particularly on the 'table' is to mutilate and open out the body of the film-celluloid, it means opening, dissecting, in fact practising *incest* for the celluloid is the maternal body one is forbidden to cut.

'All this requires no comment' (Ducasse).

Notes

1. It is the '*Presentation*' (p 9) which offers the first lexicon for our reading: *remoulding* ('text no 5 is the remoulding of three separate articles', 'one of the texts remoulded into the one bearing no 5 in this book') – *repetition* ('we have not attempted to eliminate nor to hide a few inevitable repetitions', 'except in one single instance, where the repetition would have extended over a fairly large passage we have simply suppressed that passage . . .') *to overtake* ('we didn't allow ourselves to suppress or replace certain developments which . . . appeared to have been overtaken') *addition* ('through the addition of special notes, fairly extensive ones when this seemed called for . . . we have carried out the necessary updatings') *retouches* ('various minor retouches') *basic notes* ('it is especially in texts 3, 4 and 8 that there are such "basic notes"') *self corrective notes* ('we took the opportunity to elucidate the latter by means of self corrective notes'). This kind of language is, in our opinion, not innocent. Its logic will be recovered by our reading, as we aim to provide precisely that: an *exercise in reading*.
2. cf in particular Edgar Morin: *Le Cinéma ou l'Homme Imaginaire*.
3. Texts by Mitry and Metz in Metz's essay: 'Une Etape dans la Réflexion sur le Cinéma' *Critique* no 214, March 1965, pp 228-229.
4. This assimilation through displacement finds its equivalent in literature in a Sartre or a Bernard Pingaud: the assumption that literature could not be revolutionary because it is not a rifle and cannot kill anybody (which remains to be seen).
5. C Metz, 'Problèmes actuels de Théorie du Cinéma', Revue d'Esthétique, no 2-3 (1967). Our emphasis. [Translated in this issue of *Screen*, pp 40-87 as *Current Problems of Film Theory*.]
6. This in the same way as before is made possible by and due to photographic 'analogy'. The term 'to mediate' says precisely what it means: mediate=intermediary. To found representation on such an 'authority' raises a considerable number of questions. Cinematic 'representation' is by no means elucidated by reducing it to (photographic) reproduction.
7. Concerning photogenicness and its problems, cf Edgar Morin, *op cit*.
8. C Metz, 'Une Etape . . .', p 234.
9. *Metz, Current Problems* . . . (note 20 see p 80 of this issue of *Screen*). The sentence ends as follows: 'always remains distinct from its model because of its deficit in materiality vis a vis the model'. But it seems to us that movement in the cinema is no more *material* than the fixity of the photograph. Movement and fixity are marked by a strong coefficient of illusion, *if one considers them on the level of so-called materiality*.

10. Metz writes: '*impression of reality*'; we would have preferred '*impression* of reality'.
11. But regarding the question of 'assertion', Lévi-Strauss tells us that it is the assignation of a predicate to a subject (quoted by Metz, p 87). This poses a few problems.
12. In this Metz follows the text of Barthes 'The Rhetoric of the Image' where he says that the photograph is oriented towards a 'having-been-there'.
13. The production can be 'material', but the movement produced cannot. Let us not forget that the materiality of (real) movement can be calculated, that it is a real object of a specific practice: Physics. Periodical movement (vibratory, circular, uniform, astral revolution, etc) or non-periodical movement possesses an irrefutable materiality, the metaphor of which would be their equations. (Law of free falling objects, theorem of kinetic energy, etc). On the other hand, movement in the cinema has one single cause: sequential linkage, the mechanical and regulated unwinding of the image strip. This means above all that it is impossible to talk about cinematic movement as a 'stereokinetic' movement (theory of Cesare L Musatti). In physics, when eg dealing with gravity and the movement it conditions, one does not talk about the potential energy of the body, but about the energy of the 'body-earth' system. It is not necessary to ask whether the cinema has such a 'system': it has not.
14. Maybe perception does. But surely intellection is of far greater importance than perception, whether it be in cinema or in literature.
15. The concept of diegesis will be examined later.
16. Metz, 'Une Etape', *op cit* p 247.
17. Cf Bazin, *Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma?*, Vol 2, p 100; also Metz' 'Une Etape', pp 236-237.
18. Cf Metz, *ibid*, p 237.
19. Metz, *Essais*, p 117. On p 112 we read: '*By the very fact that film always must select what it shows and what it will not show*, it transforms the world into a discourse'. [Metz's italics.]
20. This sentence is Mitry's, but Metz makes it his own. Cf 'Current Problems', *op cit* p 66.
21. Metz: 'Le Cinéma, Monde et Récit' *Critique*, no 216, May 1965, p 485.
22. Metz 'Une Etape', p 234.
23. Metz, *ibid*, p 233.
24. Metz, *ibid*, p 234.
25. Metz, 'Le Cinéma, Monde et Récit', *op cit*, p 486.
26. The author translates the Hegelian term 'Aufhebung' as 'Relève', a term proposed by Derrida. The Derriddean sense has been translated as 'effecting a relief through supersession'. The general meaning appears to be that supersession (ie *Aufhebung*) not so much 'preserves' what it eliminates, but that the very process of supersession effects a displacement and defers the concepts involved. **Editorial note.**
27. Metz, 'Une Etape', p 217. The problems associated with the terms denotation and connotation will be dealt with at a later point in the text.
28. Metz, *Essais*, p 81. Metz adds in a footnote: 'Gestalt and not graphic outline'.
29. Nietzsche: 'There is no intrinsic expression'.
30. Metz, *Essais*, p 81. The term '*grafting*' occurs many times on this page.
31. Metz, *ibid*, p 79. The phrase '*in fact*' is here far more than a

stylistic figure.

32. In the face of the present inflation of the concept of montage, a re-reading of these texts has to be undertaken *as of now*. A re-reading would mean, according to the excellent formulation of J L Comolli and J Narboni:
to read Eisenstein today as materialists, ie . . . to consider a text as a whole of which the elements lose their specific characters in order to grasp the *effective and living unity of a text*, to think the problematic particular to the text, ie a *structure determined by unity* (the *relations maintained between selection* and its objects, modalities of reflection). Then to relate this specific problematic to other contemporary problematics in the field of ideology, and finally to grasp the irruption and the mode of irruption of *concrete history* into these ideologies and into the specific ideology under consideration (*Cahiers du Cinéma*, no 217, p 12).
The *Cahiers* give an excellent formulation to the problem, but unfortunately no theoretical practice. And one would look in vain for that *research* which is called for in this passage.
33. Cf. on this topic, Bazin's remarks about the American series '*Why we fight*', distributed in France immediately after the liberation. In *Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma*, Vol 1, p 31.
34. Metz, 'Current Problems', p 69.
35. Metz, *ibid*, note 80 p 84. The notion of 'creative camera' (B Balazs).
36. Metz, *ibid*.
37. For the question of the 'Im-Segni', Cf Metz, *Essais*, pp 203, 208-211.
38. Metz (p 51-52). This would give us a tautology to infinity: the cinema is narration because it is cinema, therefore narration, therefore cinema, etc . . .
39. The words 'remember entirely' have a certain quality – the spectator is concerned with saving up and hoarding his narrative capital which is not to be lost.
40. And here we are in complete agreement on the word 'reign'.
41. This relates to an analysis by Lucien Scève ('*cinéma et méthode*').
42. Metz writes: 'E Benveniste's use of "story" corresponds generally to what we have here called "the narrative"' [in the original text this is *le réçit* or *le narratif* – Metz seems to use these as synonyms and they have therefore both been translated as 'narrative' in the text, **Editorial note.**] Metz also speaks of narrative in terms of discourse and makes the point that this second formulation 'only partially overlaps with Benveniste's definitions' (p 33 note 5). The term 'discourse' is here borrowed from Harris: 'discourse' is 'what is opposed to *langue*, any *effective* sequence of *utterances in a concrete situation* pertains to discourse' (Benveniste, quoted by Metz, note 55, p 33).
43. *Dead of Night* (1945, directed by Alberto Cavalcanti, Charles Crichton, Robert Hamer, Basil Dearden) is constructed in a circle; the last images are a repeat of the first and suggest that the nightmare will start all over again, and so on to infinity. **Editorial note.**
44. The parallel between written and oral narratives presents a twofold problem: in itself, as a parallel between *écriture* and *parole;* and through the common term which, according to Metz, links them. We do not see any 'articulated language' in Philippe Sollers' *Nombres*. And as for the term 'vehicle' . . .
45. The following paragraph will show that what Metz here calls the 'narrated' or 'signified instance' is the diegesis (narration) which belongs to the signified of denotation.

46. Barthes: 'Introduction à l'Analyse Structurale des Récits', *Communications* 8 (p 12).
47. Metz 'Une Etape' p 232.
48. Metz 'Current Problems', p 48.
49. R. Bellour, 'Un Cinéma Réel', in *Artsept* no 1, 1963.
50. Metz, see 'Current Problems'.
51. Metz (p 193): though it's true that Metz was using this information to refute the pseudo-objectivity of the film ('a film is never objective, it is always the correlative of the look').
52. We have ourselves made several attempts at 'the semiology of (cinematic) narrativity', particularly of the western. Such a semiology at the present stage seems difficult to apply to the cinema, except in *genre* films (like westerns, crime films, etc), and even then there are difficulties. The weakness of this kind of semiology is that it is preoccupied with the level of denotation alone, whereas it seems that *genre* films (westerns in particular) are constructed according to a specific usage of connotation. We intend to demonstrate this in other texts. For the moment we might also level the same criticism at the 'semiology of narrative vehicles' practised by Metz. The *exclusion* of connotation here seems close to turning into a phantasm.
53. Barthes, 'Rhetoric of the Image', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no 1.
54. The concept of the 'arbitrary' nature of the sign introduced by de Saussure has since been 'corrected' by Benveniste: the arbitrariness is not between signifier and signified but between sign and referent. This deserves to be developed further in connection with the cinema.
55. Metz (p 89, note 1), and he adds:
    we have nothing better to replace the notion of the seme. I can only observe on this point that general semiotics has nothing to offer for the moment (at least to my knowledge). This is why I have confined myself to a periphrase like 'units of the order of the sentence but which . . .' etc). Besides, it is possible that this lack is a definitive one (and that it is not truly a lack) if it is accepted that the difficulty is simply limited to the fact that 'cinematic language' does not offer specific units *at the level of the image*, but only at the level of the combinations of images.
56. 'On the level of expression, taxemes will be *grosso modo* linguistic forms which manifest themselves through phonemes' (Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a theory of language* (1943), Engl. Transl.: Bloomington, Indiana, 1953).
57. Metz (p 219). Metz indicates that he uses the term 'writing' (*écriture*) in accordance with the Barthesian distinctions, *langue*, *writing*, and *style* (see *Writing Degree Zero*, Cape, London). And he adds: "in the domain of the verbal, writing is distinct from *langue* which is made up of what would be *one* langue, because there is no such thing in fact, but it is precisely the nature of cinema that what it uses as langue is a mode of writing" (p 219, note).
58. Metz (p 69). In another text Metz returns to this question in a note:
    It is cinematic language *as such* which is lacking in distinctive units. For the 'cinema' as a whole integrates into itself various other signifying systems *each of which has its own specific behaviour* vis à vis the problem of articulation. The most obvious example – for there are others less immediately apparent – of the overlaying of codes within the cinematic totality (which complicates the problem of articulations in the cinema) is provided by the presence of

the verbal element in sound films. The effect of its intervention is to integrate doubly articulated significations into the general message of the film, but not into the specific 'language' of the cinema. (p 117, note 1) [our italics].

59. Metz (p 79). For the cinema (and the arts) as 'means of expression rather than communication' cf what was said in an earlier passage (A4). In addition, Metz writes: 'The film has symbols and not signs, it is true. But it is precisely a characteristic of the semiology of film to allow these symbols to act as signs' (see 'Current Problems').

60. Metz, 'Les Sémiotiques ou Sémies', *Communications* no 7 (p 155).

61. Metz, 'Les Sémiotiques ou Sémies', *op cit* (p 155). Metz makes the point that he is using the noun 'semy' in the sense which Buyssens gives it: 'the unit of the semy is a functional fact' (Buyssens). Metz adds: 'an observation which is eminently applicable in the cinema where what manifests the semy is sometimes iconic, sometimes phonic (sound films), sometimes graphic (sub-titles, inter-titles and credits), sometimes optical (dissolves and other special effects), sometimes sound (music) and sometimes aural (noise). The only guarantee of the reality of a signifier/signified plexus is the commutation test, and this is what makes it possible to isolate the semies' (Metz *ibid*).

62. Metz (p 156). (See also his review of Mitry in this issue).

63. In fact the term *semy* does not necessarily signify a flexible system. Some semies are extremely systematic, and there are others which Buyssens calls 'a-systematic'. But it is perhaps possible to generalise in the case of the cinema and talk of 'flexible semies'.

64. Metz, 'Current Problems', p 77.

65. Metz (p 138). And elsewhere he writes:
At particular points in the chain the inventory of units capable of appearing at that point is limited, so that the one drawn on in a particular context takes its meaning in relation to the other members of the paradigm. Thus for example the choice offered by the 'fade/dissolve' opposition in the context of 'a juncture of two sequences': a simple commutation – which the spectator moreover accomplishes spontaneously – makes it possible to isolate the corresponding signifieds. In the case of the dissolve this would be: a spatio-temporal hiatus with an unbroken underlying connection; in the case of the fade: clear spatio-temporal hiatus. But in most of the *positions* in the filmic chain the inventory of units capable of appearing at that point is very open (though not infinite) (p 102).

66. What Metz has in mind is clearly *two aspects* of the *same* problem – that of the syntagmatic, ie narration.

67. Metz, 'Une Etape' (*op cit* p 232, 233).

68. This extremely complex work seems an absolute necessity at the moment. Apart from Metz's 'rhetoric-grammar', it would encounter en route Pasolini's 'cinema of poetry' and the work of the theoreticians of montage. What is film rhetoric? What does the symbol, the ellipse, the metaphor, metonymy, mean for the cinema? These are crucial questions which need to be confronted.

69. Thus: 'What I called the "fully frequentative" syntagm with its images alternating in series, is in fact a frequentative variant of the parallel syntagm or the alternating syntagm, depending on the case'/ 'What I called the semi-frequentative is also a frequentative variant, this time of the episodic sequence'/'What I called the "bracketed frequentative" is a frequentative variant of the bracketed syntagm' (for explanations see *Essais*, p 124, note 2). (See also S. Heath *Film, Cinetext, Text*, p 114.) 'The term "*grande*"

syntagmatique is intended to make the distinction from what would be for example, a shot by shot analysis, or an analysis internal to the shot itself' (p 122 note 1). The latter analysis seems to us extremely important for the characterisation of a "genre", a style etc. . . . However, care must always be taken to set it within a dynamic schema (which is not necessarily 'narrative').

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Translated by Diana Matias and Paul Willemen

WHO'S ON FIRST?

verbal and visual gems from
the films of Abbott and Costello

edited by Richard J Anobile
introduction by Carol Burnett

Abbott: They give ball players nowadays very peculiar names... on the St Louis team we have Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know is on third.
Costello: That's what I want to find out. I want you to tell me the name of the fellows on the St Louis team.
Abbott: I'm telling you. Who's on first, What's on second, I Don't Know is on third.
Costello: You know the fellows' names?
Abbott: Yes.
Costello: Well, then, who's playin' first?
Abbott: Yes.

This classic sequence is one of many to be found in full in this sparkling collection of verbal and visual gems from the films of the Abbott and Costello partnership.
The editor, Richard J Anobile, has spent innumerable hours glued to the silver screen in order to make this incredibly funny selection of frame blow-ups (not production stills) and corresponding extracts from the original sound tracks.
Presented comic-strip style, *Who's on First?* is a book for the connoisseur who queued outside cinemas for two decades for the privilege of falling off his seat with laughter; and for the connoisseur, too, of wit and humour for whom the names Abbott and Costello are little more than history

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STUDIO VISTA

The last two years have seen a great many books on the cinema launched onto the market by the most divers publishers,[1] and we have dealt with them summarily. Christian Metz's book *Langage et Cinéma* has, on the contrary, held our attention and prompted a reading on our part – for two reasons:

1. It combats a great number of received ideas, false arguments, naive judgments and 'beliefs' – to use the author's own expression – which have never been seriously criticised and therefore obstruct and sometimes block the development of a marxist-leninist practice of film and its theory. We speak from experience: in certain stages of our own earlier work,[2] we drew upon old commonplaces disguised as modern truths and presented them as so many theoretical discoveries (eg the definition: *film is images and sounds*, and the parallel drawn between cinematic writing (écriture) and ideographic scripts, hieroglyphics in particular).
2. Certain of the questions he poses overlap with our own, and the answers he advances, once they have been displaced and transformed within a marxist-leninist perspective, can serve to advance a revolutionary theory and practice of film.

Obviously, a transformation of the positive elements (ie positive for our work) and a radical critique of the problematic which produced them is *indispensable:* the perspective in which Metz puts forward ideas which we see as useful to our practice is certainly not the one in which that practice is carried through. In the final analysis, the revolutionary ideological results which we have been able to draw from Metz's researches are of no concern or interest to him. There is a fundamental difference between Metz's project and our own. Unlike ours, his is not *political* but, as he likes to insist again and again *scientific. Science* (its progress) is the only admissible criterion for the evaluation of his work; his researches are not intended for verification in social practice, they allow only those criteria based on autonomous, intra-scientific objectives. Whether Metz likes it or not, such a programmatic standpoint places his work under the direct command of a positivist ideology which we can neither share nor reproduce. To distinguish ourselves from it is therefore an essential preliminary step for our reading.

A Science Without Norms?

The *Normative/Descriptive* opposition by which Metz defines the

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 difference between his semiological project and certain other writings on the cinema is an extremely dangerous trap.

> The semiology of film has sometimes been accused of wanting to fix normative rules which would aim at explaining to future film-makers how they should go about making films! The simple response to this is that the basic procedure of semiological analysis is very precisely the opposite of any such intention (semiology is a descriptive enterprise, its material is exclusively composed of *faits accomplis*, so to speak). The accusation is moreover particularly surprising in the field of cinema where it is precisely traditional (non-semiological) theory which is in many cases normative, sometimes in the crudest and most naive way. (pp 65-66).

Metz's opposition makes it possible to designate the non-scientific character of numerous so-called theoretical texts ' in the world of cinema, the point has been reached where the term " theoretician " is applied to people whose writings are devoted to advising film-makers to deal with " social " rather than " psychological " subjects in their films . . .'); but because the opposition bases itself on a concept of the sciences as an autonomous and neutral field, cut off from social practices, it tends to rule out the possibility for a theoretical project to be at the same time scientific and normative (for a practice). Everything that is normative is by the same token non-scientific and everything that is descriptive and/or scientific is necessarily non-normative – that is, has no related implications for some other form of social practice. The contradictions between Metz's project and a normative project like our own are clearly antagonistic. We nevertheless wish to use some of the notions advanced by Metz, and see nothing paradoxical in this. In our view the neutrality of Metz's project is an illusion, his concept of scientific experimentation as independent of social practice (ie the class struggle) is simply a *mirage*. We intend to show how his descriptive method, even if it does not function as normative for the practice of film-makers, is a (doubtlessly unconscious) *commitment* in the conflict of ideologies today. Our reading of Metz's book will therefore consist in *situating* it in its true place, which is not some illusory autonomous field of the sciences, but somewhere in the ideological totality of discourses on the cinema; for there is no discourse, albeit marked by traits of scientificity, which does not find its place in the ideological instance.[3]

Basically Metz's discourse establishes itself as the application of a programme – ' the semiology of the cinema has to be undertaken '.[4] And the imperative nature of the programme is based on the observation that ' a semiology of the cinema does not yet exist '.[5]

But what is semiology according to Metz? What is its object? Its aim? In Metz's book semiology is defined in terms of the

double opposition which relates the work of the *man of science* (ie the semiologist) with on the one hand the creative activity of the *film-maker*, and on the other, the viewing activity of the *public*.

1. Semiologist/Film-maker:

The work of the semiologist begins where that of the film-maker ends. The semiologist has before him the completed film – he doesn't have to make it, nor to say how it should be made (which would be the task of the normative theoretician), but to examine how it is made. His movement is therefore not towards the film – like the film-maker's – but from the film towards the systems which constitute it. In relation to the film-maker, the semiologist follows an inverse route.

2. Semiologist/Spectator:

Ideally, the route of the semiologist parallels that of the spectator of the film: it is a ' reading ' and not an ' *écriture* '. But the semiologist strives to make that course explicit in all its parts, whereas the spectator crosses it implicitly in his movement towards ' understanding the film '. The semiologist for his part also aims to understand how the film is understood. His course has been described as ' parallel to that of the spectator ', but it also doubles it – that is, it is parallel in the true sense and not blended with it. The semiologist's reading is a meta-reading as opposed to the ' naive ' (in fact *cultural*) reading of the spectator. (p 56).

Object and aim:

' Semiology is a descriptive enterprise '. (p 66.)
' The task which is proper to the semiology of the filmic fact is: to analyse the film text in order to isolate either cinematic systems or cinematic codes and sub-codes '. We will go into the details of the semiological enterprise as conceived by Metz later. For the moment the preceding suffices for our argument.
Let's now turn to the reading.
The fear of being accused of carrying on a normative (ie ' theoretical ' and terrorist) discourse directed at film-makers leads Metz to define the results of semiological research in reduced terms as simply feeding the scientific circuit with new knowledge. Inverse to that of the film-maker, parallel to that of the spectator, the work of the semiologist seems condemned, for fear of failing in its true object and compromising its true nature (ie transgressing the limits set for it by its methodology) never to intervene in the field where films are made and exhibited (consumed). Metz (wrongly) opposes the (naive and/or cultural) *viewing* of the spectator and critic to the (conscious, aware and expert) *observation* of the semiologist, as if the discourse of the latter were not subject,

albeit in a different way, to the same idealist determinations which govern the spectator. And as if the discourse of the semiologist never encountered that of the critic (which overdetermines in varying degrees how a great number of spectators see films). The problem is on the contrary to examine the contradictory unity of all discourses on the cinema within the ideological instance. For, despite the attempts to contain it, the knowledge produced by the semiologist is not confined within the field of science. While, as knowledge it may not directly influence cinematic practice, it necessarily modifies the balance of forces in the field of discourses on the cinema. Among all the discourses produced daily, weekly, monthly or when the mood takes them, by newspapers, magazines, specialist journals, publishing houses and the cultural and academic apparatus, there are some which occupy a referential and founding position: and this holds true however much they may be rejected or attacked, and whatever their real scientific value. Metz's work occupies such a place by virtue of its traits of scientificity. In our view these mask an effective production of knowledge, but this is not always so with those who cite him as a guarantee. They are amply satisfied with the external signs of that scientificity (seriousness, rigour, method, precision). The emergence of the semiological discourse in the field of discourses on the cinema could not fail to modify the forces which structure that field. Certain critics and theoreticians adopted the semiological discourse as a means of reinforcing their opposition to the massive dominance of impressionist criticism, using it to bolster their effort to bring certain spectators from a viewpoint programmed by subjective idealism into the ranks of objective idealism. All that they ask of semiology therefore is a certain seriousness and a few structuralist notions.

Semiology is thus exploited but it is not altogether an unwilling victim in the process. The idealist discourses of the new type find an accomplice in semiology: like them it leaves the class struggle at the door of its laboratory, never for a moment examining what it is that always gives signification (its object) a class character, namely, the inscription of films into the ideological struggle.[6]

Norms Imposed by Politics

Our project on the contrary is characterised by its consideration of film practice as an ideological practice. It is *normative* in a *political* sense. It sets us in opposition to both subjective and objective idealism. When we seek to *describe*, it is only in order to establish laws of intervention. Our project falls into two parts:

1. research into methods and tools for the reading of art-products as the products of ideology;
2. methods and tools for the activation of the contradictions which operate in a film-making practice dictated by the revolutionary standpoint of the proletariat. Commitment in politics leads to the

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practice of a cinema of commitment, and we seek less to classify films than to make class films.

It is into this double perspective that we can profitably integrate (some results of) our reading of Metz's work. What we intend to debate therefore is the displacement of a certain number of ideas. Our concern is not, however, to take the debate onto the level of science in the shape of a discussion between experts (we are not semiologists), but to situate it on that level where films, the semiological discourse and our own in fact do occur: the level of the ideological struggle. And we believe we can demonstrate that it is not questions of methodology that mark off the field of semiology, but ideological and political questions.

Re-examined from the standpoint of a critique of the limitations imposed by the idealism which programmes them (of which more traces will be found), Metz's researches as set out in his book *Langage et Cinéma* can help us to deepen the critique of our own earlier positions. They can also help to establish a more precise conceptual apparatus for our theory concerning the hierarchical organisation of the modes in which the political order determines and is reflected in the filmic fact.

Critique of the Fanaticism and the Fetishism of Specificity

It was within a perspective of the defence and illustration of *materialist cinema* (we know now the idealism sheltered and perpetuated by this term and the cinematic practice it designated – cf *Cinéthique* no 9/10) that we produced a definition of *the film that needs to be made* (for there is no point in half measures, one is either normative or not!). We defined it as a film which is founded on the premise of maximum *cinematic specificity:* the more specifically cinematic the film, the more materialist it had to be. But no definition of this specificity was produced, and such propositions were therefore less a matter of theory than symptoms of a desire. The invocation of a miraculous and mythic specificity did contain indications of the need for formal work, that is, work with signifiers – but this 'work' was considered independently, away from the movement of active reflection on social contradictions, or worse still, it replaced that movement. An effective analysis of the ideological struggle within film practice itself (*effective* because in theorising materialist cinema we also drew on the proletarian ideology) has led us to abandon these (hypo) theses *in practice,* although they had presented themselves with the force of established truths. But the logic of what produced this error has never yet been demonstrated theoretically.

The horizon fixed for the practice of a materialist cinema was the total and exclusive realisation in film of the play of specificity. But the longer that specificity remained undefined, the more devouring, all-pervasive and totalitarian it became – leaving no place in the film for any element (code) which was not specific.

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Fetishisation thus arose as a logical consequence of the absence of a clear definition. The most fanciful propositions emerged to install themselves within this gap, such as for example the theory of ' the hieroglyphic nature of cinematic *écriture* '. After *Mediterranée*[7] and a particular reading of it by Sollers (cf *Cinéthique* no 5) which was itself an off-shoot of the work of the *Tel Quel* group[8] (cf. especially ' Idéologie et Idéographie ', Jean-Pierre Faye in *Tel Quel* 29), the parallel drawn between film *écriture* and the ideographic[9] script tended implicitly to take on the stance of a definition of cinematic specificity: film came to be seen as something like a modern hieroglyphics. Since the materialist cinema takes as its objective the struggle against *representation*, it could model itself on the hieroglyphic script, in which the figuration of the referent is achieved through a contradictory play between analogy and code, but in such a way that the latter wins out. In this way the cinema was meant to break down the old trap of *mimesis* (imitation of nature) in which it had been caught till then (*Mediterranée* bringing about the break). These propositions, which were presented as theoretical innovations, in fact did little more than light up an old moon which, with eclipses of varying duration, periodically re-emerges in the field of writing on the cinema. Metz has assembled a careful history of this erroneous theory (Chapter XI 6):

> As early as 1919 in an article in *Crapouillot*, Victor Perrot was exclaiming on the subject of film: ' (It's) a form of script, ancient ideographic script! ' In a series of studies published in *Ciné France* and *Stars et Films* between 1932 and 1937, Georges Damas (who sometimes signed himself Georges Aydie) broached the subject of the evolution of the cinema and ancient ideographic scripts: ' The cinematic image is a sign like Egyptian hieroglyphs, Chinese characters, and the primitive writings of America '. Nearer our own time. . . .

and Metz goes on to quote Marcel Martin, Jean-R Debrix, S M Eisenstein, Charles Ford, Ricciotto Canudo, Antonin Artaud, Bela Balasz. There's nothing new under the sun of idealism.[10] As for the project of inscribing revolutionary film practice into a ' generalised movement of *écriture* ' – (' *l'écriture*: a new continent ') a project to which we have ourselves subscribed – today we can say that it derived from similar illusions.

The gap left by the absence of any precise and complete definition of the specificity of the cinema was filled by vague and incomplete definitions which furnished apparent theoretical bases for a mechanistic materialist concept of the cinema. This applies to our utilisation of the formula which Godard promulgated after *Le Gai Savoir*, but which only produced interesting results in *Pravda:* namely, *film is images and sounds.*[11] This definition in fact comes down to characterising the cinema by its material basis

in terms of its technical and sensorial aspects – or more accurately, by its *material of expression.*[12] According to Metz, there was nothing new in this either:

> The definition of the cinema in terms of the material of expression follows a fairly accepted pattern. The notion owes its success to the fact that it offers a type of unity for the filmic fact which is, so to speak, discretely spectacular: it offers a kind of homogeneity which is based directly on the technical and sensorial aspects, a coherence of a material order. (p 17)

It was tempting to qualify as materialist the theoretical implications of this ' material coherence ', but it was coherence of a very reductive and mechanistic kind for it eliminated other materials. As Metz points out: ' Even if the cinema is defined in technical and sensorial terms, what should be brought out by such a definition is not a single material of expression, but a specific combination of several such materials ' (p 25). And five materials of expression need to be distinguished: moving photographic images arranged in sequences, phonetic sound (speech), recorded musical sound, recorded noise, writing.

If the combination of the materials of expression does not provide an adequate definition of the specificity of the cinema, what does? ' The only entities capable of being specific or non-specific in relation to the cinema are *codes* (systems), according to whether film is the sole (or at least the privileged) location of their manifestation, or whether on the contrary the film simply ' adopts ' them from other cultural sets ' (p 30). This does not mean that it may not be necessary to consider simultaneously, but as secondary determinations, characteristics pertaining to the material of expression. But ' there is a great deal of difference between a specificity which is defined *directly* in terms of material criteria and a specificity defined in terms of codes, even if the specification of the codes in turn demands a consideration of particular features of the material of the signifier – not of that material itself taken *en bloc without analysis* ' (p 31).

Specific and Non-specific Codes

The specificity of the cinema has thus to be defined in terms of what it characterises: namely, codes. The *codes* qualified as *specific* appear only in films; they distinguish themselves from the *non-specific codes* in that the latter are present in, but are not exclusive to, films. Metz makes a very productive distinction between cinema and film: a film is a composite system of heterogeneous codes, some of them specific, others not. Cinema (the cinematic) designates a set of homogeneous codes, the specific codes. Having established the notion of non-specific codes, Metz concentrates on showing that the specificity which is their mark is diversified, relative and plural. In a chapter entitled: ' the inter-

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> The definition of the cinema in terms of the material of expression follows a fairly accepted pattern. The notion owes its success to the fact that it offers a type of unity for the filmic fact which is, so to speak, discretely spectacular: it offers a kind of homogeneity which is based directly on the technical and sensorial aspects, a coherence of a material order. (p 17)

It was tempting to qualify as materialist the theoretical implications of this ' material coherence ', but it was coherence of a very reductive and mechanistic kind for it eliminated other materials. As Metz points out: ' Even if the cinema is defined in technical and sensorial terms, what should be brought out by such a definition is not a single material of expression, but a specific combination of several such materials ' (p 25). And five materials of expression need to be distinguished: moving photographic images arranged in sequences, phonetic sound (speech), recorded musical sound, recorded noise, writing.

If the combination of the materials of expression does not provide an adequate definition of the specificity of the cinema, what does? ' The only entities capable of being specific or non-specific in relation to the cinema are *codes* (systems), according to whether film is the sole (or at least the privileged) location of their manifestation, or whether on the contrary the film simply ' adopts ' them from other cultural sets ' (p 30). This does not mean that it may not be necessary to consider simultaneously, but as secondary determinations, characteristics pertaining to the material of expression. But ' there is a great deal of difference between a specificity which is defined *directly* in terms of material criteria and a specificity defined in terms of codes, even if the specification of the codes in turn demands a consideration of particular features of the material of the signifier – not of that material itself taken *en bloc without analysis* ' (p 31).

Specific and Non-specific Codes

The specificity of the cinema has thus to be defined in terms of what it characterises: namely, codes. The *codes* qualified as *specific* appear only in films; they distinguish themselves from the *non-specific codes* in that the latter are present in, but are not exclusive to, films. Metz makes a very productive distinction between cinema and film: a film is a composite system of heterogeneous codes, some of them specific, others not. Cinema (the cinematic) designates a set of homogeneous codes, the specific codes. Having established the notion of non-specific codes, Metz concentrates on showing that the specificity which is their mark is diversified, relative and plural. In a chapter entitled: ' the inter-

 weaving of specificities: multiple specificities, degrees of specificity, modes of specificity' Metz goes so far as to speak of a '*hierarchy in specificity*' (p 169).

Determining how this hierarchy is constituted requires an inventory of the codes which make up *cinematic language* (langage), for cinematic language is simply the 'set of cinematic (ie specific) codes and sub-codes'. If we accept the principle that 'a code can be specific to several languages', then one has to try and establish the other languages in which a particular cinematic code can also appear. This leads us to the conclusion 'that every language is the site of a work of structuration, with its own dynamic which confers on the various 'reassembled' codes, positions which they have only in that language and which therefore characterise that language and not the codes'. Cinematic specificity can therefore be said to be a phenomenon in two stages: the combination itself is specific, and so are certain combined entities.

A language is also characterised, albeit in a secondary way, by the material of the signifier, and this feature should not be disregarded. It is on the contrary the basis on which an inventory of the appearances of a code in a particular language can be drawn up. Specificity has to be defined as 'a notion which is both material and systematic' (p 173). Metz outlines the project in the following way: 'The sensorial features to which a given code is intrinsically linked have to be identified and enumerated (in the form of discrete units), on the premise that there are features of the material of the signifier attached to each code' (p 167).

Once this is established, a hierarchy of the specific codes in order of their specificity can be drawn up. 'The ultimate degree of specificity belongs to the code which features in the cinema alone . . . for which all the features of the material of the expression are pertinent, leaving no margin for its manifestation in any other language' (p 169).

The complexity of the field of the specific codes can therefore be organised according to 'a certain number of circles, concentric or secant; each circle marks off what in set-theory is called a class: a group of codes, and at the same time a group of languages, ie the set of languages to which this group of codes, and no other, is exclusively attached' (p 171).

The Circles of Specificity

To take an example, we will look at the procedure by which Metz situates the circles of specificity related to the codes of the image-strip (pp 171-176).

– *First Circle*

'The codes which invest the image as such';

. . . the codifications of this group are those for which the distinctive feature, in the material of expression, is only the

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trait of *visual iconicity*. . . . The visual iconic codes are obviously cinematic as it is an important feature of the cinema to consist of, amongst other things, images. But their degree of specificity is nevertheless fairly low since they are also involved, apart from the cinema, in all the image-languages, and these are relatively numerous – figurative drawing, painting, frescoes, cartoons, comic strips, television, photography, the photo-story etc.

This circle also contains the codes related to spatial disposition of iconic items and the role of the frame. It also includes codes which are of great importance regarding the theory of ideologies – to which we shall return later: namely, the codes of analogy,

which ensure that an object is experienced as ' resembling '. Analogy is not the opposite of codification, it is itself coded, even though it is a specific feature of its codes that they are experienced as natural by the social user. This involves a whole set of psycho-physiological constructs integrated in the perceptual activity itself, the conditions of which vary markedly from one culture to another.

– *Second Circle*
All the codes relating to the fact that the image is obtained by mechanical duplication can be put in this group. ' Codes which the cinema shares with television, photography, series of photographs, etc, but not with drawing, painting, the fresco, comic strip, or animated film '. These codifications feature a degree of cinematicity which remains below the maximum, but which is higher than that of the general iconic codes. This is the location of codes relating to camera angle, focal effects, filters, etc.

– *Third Circle*
' The cinematic image is not only mechanical and iconic, it is also *multiple* – ie it occurs in sequence with itself: a film is *a number of* images '. The photo-story, animated film, comic strip, fresco, reappear here, but not painting, drawing or photography. This therefore is the location of codes relating to cinematic montage.

– *Fourth Circle*
Codes related to the fact that the cinematic image is a moving image. This includes only three languages – television, film and the animated film. ' The codifications of level four are therefore of a higher degree of cinematicity than those of level three since the cinema shares them with fewer means of expression . . .'

– *Fifth Circle*
' Group five is the logical product of four and two. It includes only those languages which figure in both four (multiple image and movement) and two (mechanical image), ie cinema and television '. In this group are found all the codes relating to ' the *movement*

 of the image and movement in the image ' – camera movement, montage effects such as editing on movement, etc.

Metz then goes on to draw up the same kind of hierarchised inventory for the *sound-track*. We will confine ourselves to the one we are interested in establishing. The only way to avoid fetishising cinematic specificity is to examine it, as Metz has done, in a *systematic* and relative way. This theoretical position rules out any attempt to confine film exclusively within the play of specific codes, and sweeps away any ' panic about transgressing the bounds of the cinema ', for one of his conclusions needs to be stressed:

> A code which is more specific than another is not necessarily more important; it is merely a code which the language under examination shares with fewer others (and which therefore characterises that language to a greater degree) (p 183).

If the analysis takes into account not just the primary object of semiology (the study of cinematic language), but its secondary object as well (the study of films as systems), it is possible to argue that the specific codes are not necessarily the most important codes of a film system. The non-specific codes also play a role in the establishment of that system, and the question then is whether this role is not perhaps always the primary one.

On the subject of a definition of the non-specific codes, Metz observes that in every language there are codes of expression and codes of content, which means that in terms of the global text of a given language, entire codes (each with its plane of expression and plane of content) can emerge unilaterally on the side of expression (or content) ' (p 187), and he goes on to note that ' *the non-specific codes are always situated on the side of the codes of content* '. The film has already been defined as a combination of heterogeneous codes. What now needs to be seen is that this combination is dialectical and not simply a matter of *addition:* it therefore transforms the duality of specific and non-specific codes into a *mixture*. This combining of codes is a *work* and a *movement*.

> The activity of integration (or disintegration) – in other words the operation of *écriture* – whereby a film draws on all its codes, modifying, combining and ' playing them out ' against each other, is what eventually constitutes its final (or primary?) system of unification and intelligibility (p 75).

Translating this into marxist terms, a film is therefore a set of *contradictions* between two types of heterogeneous elements – the specific and the non-specific codes – and of contradictions within the specific and within the non-specific codes. These are the contradictions which can be distinguished from the standpoint of ideology. The contradictions which traverse the non-specific codes are in fact those which principally characterise the conflict between the pro-

letarian and bourgeois ideologies, investing all the non-specific codes unequally (in their unseparable and unequal relationship) and to varying degrees (in general the code of dress is less important than that of speech, but this is not an absolute rule).

The contradictions which structure the specific codes are those which assign a greater or lesser role to some element from the standpoint of its ability to conserve or reproduce a particular ideology. In this context the codes of iconic analogy are certainly among the most ideologically loaded. (Metz says that analogy is itself coded, which is of course true, but it should also be said that it is coded by the conflict of ideologies (what some would call ' culture ').) The question now posed concerns the nature of the relationship which unites the non-specific and specific codes within one filmic system. The pages which Metz devotes to posing (without resolving) this problem are from our standpoint the most interesting in his book.

The Balance of Forces

It does seem that for Metz, no code or group of codes in the filmic system can play a *governing role*, no code or group of codes can function as a principal aspect of a principal contradiction.

> In the total structure of a given text, no code – not even those mobilised by the text itself – plays a central role. What characteristically ' makes ' the filmic system is the transition from one code to another: every film is constructed *with* a variety of codes, and it is this preposition ' with ' which is the crux of the problem; for a film is also constructed against these codes. In this sense every film is built on the destruction of its codes (p 77).

> It is the system of the text, as the role-distributing instance which assigns each element its place in the structure.

> The system of the text is the instance which *displaces* the codes, deforming each of them through the presence of the others, contaminating the ones by the others . . . and *placing* each code in a determined position in the overall structure. The process of displacement thus results in a putting into place, which is itself destined to be displaced by another text (p 78).

We could agree with this structural view of roles if the question of *what* produces this structure and its systems were posed with equal explicitness. In a sense Metz does pose the question, but fails to follow it through to the end, invoking reasons of a methodological order, whereas we see the evasion as a concrete result of the limits within which semiology is enclosed by its ideological presuppositions.

Metz goes a considerable way towards setting out the elements of the problem, for, while suggesting that no group of codes has

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a motor role in a film (ie occupies the position of a principal aspect of a principal contradiction), he at the same time establishes the existence of a *balance of forces* between the cinematic and the non-cinematic elements. But to speak of a *balance of forces* in itself implies a relationship between a dominated element and a dominant one, which means that while their role and determining strength may not be equal, they nevertheless together exercise determinations on the structure and on each other.

Metz goes further and – in contradiction to some of the positions he takes elsewhere – tries to break out of this notion of non-determination; he takes a series of precise examples and tries to establish whether cinematic or extra-cinematic '*motivations*' were determining for the system under consideration. Thus on the subject of *Intolerance* he says: 'It was extra-cinematic considerations which imposed the choice made from among the resources offered by the cinematic codes'. But an unwillingness or inability to deal with the question of a hierarchisation within determinations carries the day, since he immediately adds: 'but the reverse is also true: the notion of intolerance as it finally emerges from the text was to a great extent deflected towards a timeless horizon because the cinematic process which produced the film was based on parallelism'.

For a clarification of the problem of the *balance of forces* which structure a film, two things need to be distinguished: 1. The balance of forces itself, which structures the system and which we will call its *internal causes;* 2. the contradictory determinations operating from outside the system which bring these forces into relationship with each other, and which we will call the *external causes.*

While it is true that a contradiction always evolves from the internal causes, it is also true that its development only takes place in conditions fixed by the external causes.

Having established this and bearing in mind that the internal causes of a filmic process are not purely specific but consist of a body of heterogeneous cinematic and extra-cinematic elements, we will test the relevance of the examples Metz selects to illustrate his view of this balance of forces. Our examination will aim to show the motor (principal) role played by the non-specific codes in the contradictions of the process itself (its internal causes) and to designate the extra-cinematic determinations as principal among the external causes.

Example 1: the militant film. 'In the militant film of the classic type the cinematic choices are directly dependent on extra-cinematic intentions'.

Example 2: the 'formalist' film. 'In the "art" film, the situation is precisely the reverse'. In this type of film, qualified as the 'art' film by Metz, he maintains that the cinematic choices are primary, and dictate the extra-cinematic choices.

Example 3: the ' new type ' of political film which, Metz says, is an example of a ' double and evenly balanced influence ':

> These films are inspired by extra-cinematic systems of thought such as historical materialism or dialectical materialism, but they aim to bring marxist subversion into the cinematic codes, or to rethink that subversion on the basis of pre-existant cinematic codes (ie the notion of ' deconstruction ' borrowed from analogous work in the field of writing).

These examples are clearly aimed at illuminating the balance of forces solely within the ensemble of external causes of a filmic system. But these hierarchised *influences* also exert an effect on what Metz calls the cinematic and non-cinematic *contributions*, which are hierarchised in the same way – in other words these influences affect the codes of the system whose balance (of forces) and movement is dictated by the hierarchised set of internal causes. These two systems of determinations are inadequately distinguished by Metz, and the laws of their reciprocal action are obscured. In order to clarify the question we will look more closely at each of Metz's examples.

In the case of the *militant film*, we agree with Metz that ' the cinematic choices are directly dependent on extra-cinematic (ie political) intentions '. In other words, in the body of external causes, the non-specific determinations dominate, and among them, the political causes dictate the movement of the process. There is implicit in the Metzian formulation an indication that this balance of forces on the level of external causes entails an analogous hierarchy at the level of the internal causes of the filmic process: ie the work of the specific codes is dictated by the non-specific codes which have been put into the system. This we think is correct.

What we would add – and in a sense it is suggested by Metz in the opposition he implicitly sets up between traditional militant films and the so-called ' new type ' of political film – is that the non-invention of new codes (and as a corollary, the non-subversion of the old ones) is politically determined: the line conveyed by these films is not revolutionary (but in many cases bourgeois liberal, social democrat or revisionist). This kind of film does not call for new cinematic codes, or rather sub-codes[13]: its requirements are met by the codes which the bourgeoisie uses (more accurately, the dominant sector of the bourgeoisie) to reproduce its ideology by disseminating it. Only a political line which is hostile to dominant class interests demands the invention of new specific sub-codes for its diffusion through film. It is possible of course that revolutionary political films only achieve a partial transformation of old cinematic codes, but this produces a true contradiction. In the case of non-revolutionary militant films, there is no effective contradiction between their political line and the traditionalist cinema.

The ' new type of political film ' which Metz describes as the kind ' that *Cinéthique* would like to see the multiplication of ', is on the contrary, under a political (marxist-leninist) obligation to produce specific codes and sub-codes which are radically new. But Metz's label ' new type of political film ' seems to confuse films of two kinds (which we ourselves did not distinguish clearly enough before no 9/10).

- the marxist leninist film
- the deconstruction film

These two types of film stem from opposing ideological and political practices

(A) The Marxist-Leninist Political Film

(Initiated by the work of the Dziga Vertov group.) It would be difficult to argue that this type of film constitutes ' a good example of a double and evenly balanced influence ', at least in the sense that Metz intended it. For the balance of forces between the cinematic and extra-cinematic (in this case political) determinations leans heavily to the side of the latter on the level of the external causes; and – the one implies the other – on the level of the internal contradictions within the filmic process, the balance of forces which drives the movement of the film is dictated by the domination of the non-specific codes invested in it. The reason why this system takes in new codes is because the kind of non-specific (marxist-leninist) codes which go to make it up have never (or almost never) featured in what is conventionally known as the History of the Cinema. The novelty of the one summons up the novelty of the other. Of course not all the codes which have not yet been ' brought to the screen ' (ie which are not yet filmic) necessarily imply a future transformation of cinematic codes and sub-codes at least not in such decisive terms as this. The films in question here absolutely demand that transformation because they are by nature in an antagonistic (incompatible and irreconcilable) opposition to the bourgeois non-specific codes. And also because the specific codes of cinema are fundamentally implicated in the ideology (they cannot be abstracted from the ideological struggle as simple tools, as the revisionists, the Lebels [see note 1] of this world proclaim).

The word which should be used to designate this process of production, this invention of new specific codes, is the word *transformation*, not subversion (as Metz does on several occasions). Subversion connotes a temporary activity having an end in itself, while transformation relates back to the dialectical idea of criteria. We should avoid fetishising (ie valorising for itself) the production of the *new*. What has to be stressed on the other hand is that this transformation is dictated by the political level and directed towards political ends; and that it can be as diversified, relative and progressive (and therefore uneven from one revolu-

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tionary film to the next) as the specificity of the cinematic codes. Saying that it depends on the political message to be *propagated*, is simply observing that it also depends on the audience aimed at, and therefore entails considerations of a socio-cultural order (the level of the relation of the 'public' with film language). For a code is also a system of decoding and obviously the possession of the code (and its decoding system) varies from country to country, class to class, historical period to historical period. It's worth noting for instance that the Chinese films of the moment are not *transforming* all those specific codes which the bourgeois avant garde films are *subverting;* the point being that this transformation is not an autonomous activity and that it is being produced in films aimed not at an elite, but at the wide mass of workers, peasants and soldiers. The transformation of specific codes in these films is therefore subject to a double determination: the political message to be transmitted, and the public at which it is aimed. It would be superficial to approach them academically (drawing parallels with the Hollywood system!) without taking the trouble to examine the concrete context of a particular code drawn from the western bourgeois system, or examining the process of ideological struggle which produced the utilisation of each code (transforming it a little, much, or not at all). This does not mean that these films should be protected from all criticism as if a new transformation were not both necessary and desirable, but a critique with a view to transforming Chinese cinematic practice can only be made from the standpoint of the ideological struggle which has produced those films as they exist today, and not from the abstract and autonomous standpoint of the historian of (bourgeois) avant gardisms. While the bourgeois avant gardes are in fact engaged in a struggle against the dominant bourgeois cinema, it is certainly not being waged from the historical position of marxist-leninist films – also established in contradiction with the dominant bourgeois cinema.

(B) The Deconstruction Film

The fact that the transformation of old codes demanded by revolutionary cinematic practice is impossible without a critical return on these codes does not make this an operation of *deconstruction.* What is involved is *destruction.* As distinct from marxist-leninist films, based on a materialist type of negation which implies the destruction of what is negated, the deconstruction films are based on a negation of the idealist type – a negation which negates but preserves what is negated.

The deconstruction film (the proto-type of which is *Mediterranée*) misuses and exploits the marxist-leninist demand for transformation as a way of instigating a subversion of the cinematic codes which is not demanded by the non-specific codes concerned, since these are not revolutionary. This is subversion – an operation of

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 negation which does not involve the necessity nor the finality of a revolutionary politics. Politics and philosophy in this context function as an alibi for a purely formal subversion.

In this case it might at first seem that it is the intra-cinematic determinations which are primary and dictate the formation of the filmic system, at the level of both external and internal causes. This is in fact not so. At the level of the external causes what drives the filmic work is a particular ideology of art and the typically petit-bourgeois ideological struggle; and at the level of internal causes it is of course the non-specific codes invested which dictate the movement of the specific codes. These non-specific codes and sub-codes relate to the levels of politics and philosophy in an idealist and bourgeois manner. In *Sous le Signe du Scorpion,* and *Othon,* the problem of power features in an abstract and a-historical way. The relations between social groups form structures which true enough are objective, but are detached from concrete history and produce no knowledge for the revolutionary struggle.

In *Mediterranée* the philosophical elements invested derive from an out-dated, mechanistic, and pre-dialectical materialism, thereby censoring the fact of dialectical materialist philosophy, the proletarian concept of the world and historical materialism.

The *'art' film.* In Metz's work this term does not refer to anything precise. He establishes in abstract terms the possibility that a system may be dictated by determinations which are principally or exclusively cinematic. We would like to have concrete examples of what Metz has in mind. We are convinced that on the basis of any such examples we would be able to demonstrate that the apparent dominance of this level is in fact in the last analysis dictated by politics.

The term *'artist' film* seems to function in the text as an opposition to 'the film whose system is ingenious but not subtle'. The example given is *Intolerance,* which is analysed in great detail. Metz asserts the impossibility of drawing up a hierarchy of determinations for this kind of film: cinematic and non-cinematic elements seem to dictate the system to an equal extent, on the levels of internal and external causes alike. As an example: the 'desire for parallel montage' seems to have an important role to play on the level of external causes (which would imply that parallel montage had the decisive role in the system of internal causes). Our response to this hypothesis is as follows: it is of course possible to see such a desire and its realisation as the origin of films in which parallel montage plays an essential role, but in this *particular* film *Intolerance,* this cannot possibly be what rules the filmic process. What does dictate it is the factor which Metz analyses in minute detail – the reactionary, humanist, a-historical notion of intolerance which Griffiths shares with his class and with which he invests the film by virtue of his role as the ideological agent of that class.

It would therefore be better to say that a particular objective ideology found the means of investing itself in the film through a particular subjective desire, rather than that the desire succeeded in realising itself by means of that ideology.

Semiology and Ideology

By failing to set out the problem of the balance of forces – whose existence he establishes – in terms of a hierarchisation of the various types of traces within a process, even going so far as to brush this possibility aside with methodological pretexts, Metz remains true to the general project of the ' human sciences '. These ' sciences ' segregate their objects in order to make them autonomous and cut them off from one another and from what links them, namely the class struggle. For the basic exclusion on which these sciences are established is clearly that of historical materialism. Metzian semiology is no exception in this respect. In place of Marxist concepts he has vague psychological and sociological concepts which dominate the foreground of semiological theory in a massive way. This sentence for example: ' The influence may be stronger in one direction than another, depending on the film, the film-maker – and perhaps also the epoch and the (conscious and unconscious) principles which guide the practice of men of the cinema '. It is clear from this how imprecise terms – *epoch, principles, influences, men of the cinema* – take the place of the Marxist concepts *social formation, historical moment, ideology, class position/attitude, contradiction.* Equivalents of the last two don't even occur in Metz's text. The utilisation of these concepts would dictate a different problematic and it is not therefore a question of simply transcribing or translating. One begins to understand the delay in producing a solution to the problem posed, why it always remains caught at the level of examples, why no clear conclusions are ever drawn and why it is finally evacuated from the semiological field into that of other specialisms. The multiplication of the human sciences is in fact very convenient for those who want to stay locked up in their own laboratories – they can always tell a caller to try next door, look in another drawer or a different cupboard. Thus Metz can say: ' These considerations involve the psycho-sociology of cinematic " creation " (and sense perceptions) as well as various general epistemological problems, rather than a structural analysis of films themselves '.

In this way the problem which expresses the ideological struggle in a condensed form is no sooner posed than it is thrust somewhere ' prior to ' film or beyond it, as if the ideological struggle did not intervene decisively in the formation and functioning of every filmic system. This error is analogous to one we ourselves committed (cf. no 6 ' Le procès de production du film ') in defining the filmic *process* (a term which Metz, following Hjelmselv, proposes as an equivalent for the singular filmic system) as constituted by aesthetic

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 elements alone (corresponding to the notion of specificity set forth here). This is an error which Metz avoids since he defines the film as heterogeneous. We described the filmic process as having 'a primary material which is itself aesthetic', which had the effect of pushing the ideological struggle beyond the film itself into the pre-texts and into its results, as Metz has also done, for different reasons. This book, which deals with cinematic language and the analysis of film texts, never once relates the question of signification to the ideological struggle. In this respect the misunderstanding of what constitutes ideology, ideologies and ideological apparatus which can be deduced from the way the word 'ideology' occurs in the Metzian text, is very significant.

For instance, the word ideology never appears without pejorative connotations. It is often associated as a synonym or equivalent with: *stereotype* (p 9); *propaganda* (p 9) – while the word has nothing pejorative about it for us, for Metz *propaganda* is unequivocally associated with stereotype – *phantasm* (p 25), *banality* (p 71), *constraint* (p 200), *fanaticism* (p 29). Ideology also clearly draws its strongest definitions from its opposition to science in Metz's work. (As in the early Althusser texts, ideology is here the reverse side of science).

And science itself owes its definition to a positivism of the most traditionally rationalist kind. It is in fact through its association with phantasm and fanaticism that ideology is set in opposition to science (seen as rational and neutral, cautious and clear) with the result that both the unconscious and commitment – which are among the features that characterise ideology in effect – are given pejorative connotations. In several instances in the Metzian text the word ideology designates a system of *collective* ideas or representations, but without any attempt to relate them as such to social class. For example on p 26: 'The cinema is wide open to all symbolic systems, collective representations and ideologies'. And on p 25: '... wide open to all social, cultural, aesthetic ideological, etc influences and initiatives': the cultural and aesthetic are thus disassociated from the ideological.

But undoubtedly the most striking instance is the statement assigning ideology to the individual as a mark of personal expression – as if individuals were not beset by ideology, or rather by several conflicting ideologies. The sentence reads:

> There are many other ways of defining originality and banality; for instance in terms of the subject of the expression: in an original work, the subject who 'expresses himself' is a unique and separate being, in other words an individual, while in the banal work, this subject is in reality a social group or an anonymous ideology, a body of collective representations, or an archetype arising directly out of some profound but impersonal psychology (p 271).

Such examples make it obvious that Metz's work totally ignores the development of the theory of ideologies, and holds to the accepted notions (which ' are not ideologically neutral ', to quote a recognised formula which says exactly what it means). It is a different matter for words like *cinema* and *film*, where Metz passes the accepted notions through the sieve of a semiological critique. The fact that ideology, which essentially characterises the numerous non-specific codes and, incidentally and to varying degrees, a great many others, is not once related to the existence of social classes whose struggle structures our social conditioning, means that semiology can yet again be sheltered from the class struggle by its methodological umbrella. Understanding the social character of signification (whose structures are the object of semiology in general) means understanding that no language can be exercised outside the ideological class struggle. It means taking as the point of departure that no language exists outside the ideological apparatus (of the State); this is not the same as saying – as some contortionist readings have tried to make us say – that language is reduced to those determinations which stem necessarily from the apparatus in which it operates. This is not a denial of the determinations that arise from the signifying material and the established code systems – but, to take an example, how could one separate the action of specific and non-specific codes from the existence of the Centre National du Cinéma and other sectors of the State film apparatus? (On this subject see the articles on censorship in *Cinéthique* nos 11/12 and 13/14). This is a separation which we, for our part, intend to make.

Questions put to Christian Metz

After this reading of Metz's work it seemed useful to submit the following questions to the author in order to open up a discussion on ' *our* ' *territory.*

1. What was the model on which you based your idea of the system as the instance which displaced codes? And unless we are to relapse into a structuralist position (where structure is defined in relation to itself, by its internal, not external, relations, and operates solely on the basis of its own contradictions) shouldn't the question (which you raise) of the balance of forces which structures this system not be followed through to the end (ie in terms of the hierarchy which operates within determinations)?

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2. In your conceptual system the film-maker is sometimes defined as an individual (the film then being the original expression of a subject – as opposed to the ' anonymous ' ideology determining the films of the mediocre film-maker), and sometimes as an effect of the filmic structure. How would you resolve this? And could you specify the place, role and importance of what you call the ' (conscious or unconscious) principles which guide the practice of different " men of the cinema " '?

3. You advance the idea – and we agree – that the struggle between the specific sub-codes is what constitutes the history of the cinema. Could you give some indication of the struggles which have set the different sub-codes of the editing code in opposition to each other throughout the history of cinema? Are these struggles not linked to the class struggles which unfolded in the ideological instance in the course of history? How do you see this relationship?

Answers from Christian Metz

Response to the first question. The model on which I constructed the notion of the textual system (ie the process which displaces codes) is constituted on the one hand by the body of the semiological, linguistic and so-called ' structuralist ' movement which, well before me, had already elaborated concepts such as code, text, system, etc; and on the other hand by a critical return on this movement which in its classical form (ie in what I would call ' primary semiology ') had established a too static idea of systems and failed to master in theoretical terms the problem of textuality as a concrete progression (concrete but regulated). I was guided in this process of critical return by various researches which all in their way share in the birth of a second semiology: the recent writings of Roland Barthes, generative transformational grammar, the semanalysis of Julia Kristeva, the marxist notion of *transformation,* freudo-lacanian psychoanalysis, etc. I agree with you on the need to distinguish between the *internal* ' balance of forces ' (ie intra-textual dialectics) and the external balance of forces, that is to determine the real weight of the influences which ensure that each film is what it is.

I am also in agreement with you on another point. At the external level the specifically cinematic choices are themselves dependent on non-specific factors. In other words it is normal to oppose the ' cinematic ' to the ' broadly cultural ' when *we are studying a film* (ie in an internal analysis), but when the question is why a film is what it is (external analysis) the cinematic is

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clearly part of the cultural, but the cultural is not part of the cinematic: they are linked by a relationship of inclusion which functions in one direction: everything that is cinematic is historico-social, but everything that is historico-social is not cinematic.

It is therefore true that the ' specific ' at a certain point refers back to the non-specific. I had in 1967 expressed a similar idea in Volume I of *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma* (pp 210-211, note 54, final paragraph). It was no more than a brief remark, but it is absolutely in line with our discussion today.

' External ' study has little place in *Langage et Cinéma* because this is a semiological work and the conceptual tools of semiology in my opinion relate principally to internal study (ie the immanent and textual). But I in no sense consider external study inessential or superfluous: the entire first chapter of the book (on the notion of *cinema* in the sense of Cohen-Séat) unequivocally asserts the need for such studies and the whole of Chapter II (with the three related concepts of ' cinematic-non-filmic ', ' filmic-non-cinematic ' and ' cinematic-filmic ') strives to think the relationships between internal and external studies.

Response to question 2. I do not consider the film-maker as a creative individual at all. The sanctifying notions of *auteur, oeuvre,* etc . . . are explicitly criticised and rejected in a number of passages of *Langage et Cinéma,* in particular p 9 and p 117.

In a more general way, my book clearly rejects (cf. p 9 and p 200) the principle of *cultural legitimacy* in the sense of Bourdieu-Passeron, and it is always in an ironic or distanciated tone that such notions as ' *Seventh Art* ' and ' *chefs-d'oeuvres* of the screen ' etc are used.

You are of course correct in saying that for me science, or more accurately, the effort of scientificity, since I do not believe in science as an accomplished fact – cannot as such be confused with any ideology, even a revolutionary one. But this does not in any sense mean that Science is in my eyes neutral for in its efforts to set itself off from *opinion* (the act of break which is scientificity itself) it is led to criticise most often the opinions which it meets most often: that is, those which are dominant; and consequently it gives many more arguments (only because it is well carried out as a science) to one particular ideology than to another.

As for the precise passage of my book (p 71) to which you refer on the question of the original film-maker conceived as the ' subject of the expression ', it occurs in a chaper (VI 1) which consists entirely of an ironic critique of the traditional opposition between ' original ' and ' banal ', a critique to which I accord sufficient importance to feature it as such in my index of concepts. In short, I never endorse the definition of the film-maker as a ' person ' who ' expresses himself ' etc.

As far as I am concerned, the film-maker is only an effect of the

 text, the effect of the textual system of the films he has made. It does not seem to me that there is any contradiction on this point in my book which constantly talks of texts, codes, systems, etc, and never of individuals or inspired film-makers, except ironically.

You have asked me what I mean by ' conscious or unconscious principles which guide the practice of men of the cinema '. This is a notion which unlike that of cinema as effect of a text, arises on this occasion out of external analysis.

' Conscious principles ' are the *opinions* and *attitudes* of the film-maker in relation to cinematic and extra-cinematic problems. In short his ideology (cf. response to the first question).

By ' unconscious principles ' I mean the particular and psychic organisation characteristic of every man of the cinema (and of every man, full stop) and more specifically his *meta-psychological configuration* in the freudian sense.

These two factors on the external level seem to me determining in relation to the production of film.

Response to question 3. There can be no doubt that the history of the cinema like the history of any thing – and therefore among other things the process of differentiation of specifically cinematic sub-codes – is to a large extent linked to the class struggle (see for example the reflections of Eisenstein on montage). But as soon as one is dealing with a product of culture and not the infrastructure, psychoanalytic determinations (cf. above) also enter in. These may well in their turn be inscribed in a history which would be neither alien to the first nor could be confused with it. Finally, there is a relative autonomy specific to facts of language and textual processes (and therefore a third history, entertaining complex relations with the first and second histories).

At the present stage of my work I do not yet have clear ideas regarding the interplay of all these connections and inter-connections. For this reason I would not wish to *anticipate*, with pompous declarations, on the results of careful and detailed research which has not yet been produced.

(March 14, 1972)

Metz *in Question*

Having read Christian Metz's brief replies which reaffirm without discussion the principles we challenged – ignoring in particular our analysis of the internal relation of forces in a filmic process which contradicted certain of his points – we are obliged to note that at the present juncture an *ideological* discussion of the assumptions and development of semiology of the cinema seems alien to

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his practice.

We hope that certain transformations – linked to the development of the class struggle in France – of the field in which he is working (and especially the production of films which are made on the basis of the proletarian ideology – for it is not unimportant that semiology usually chooses as its objects films which are most massively invested by the bourgeois ideology) will oblige him to confront the problems which our text and questions perhaps posed too prematurely.

Notes

1. The Universities are making a show of taking the mass ideological revolt of May '68 as a challenge to academicism coupled with a demand for modernisation: hence their hasty attempt to deflect the crisis they are undergoing by giving a much greater place to new disciplines (the whole gamut of social sciences) and by instituting objects of study such as 'the cinema' which previously existed only marginally, (eg the 'Institut de Filmologie' in the fifties) if indeed they existed at all.

   Even where they did exist, their place was in any case non-specific (the few courses, dissertations, and theses on the cinema were done in the arts faculties and most often around the famous question of adaptation). After May '68 numerous branches and departments for film and audio-visual studies of varying importance and autonomy were created. The movement is only just beginning and it is intended to grow: the end in view is the teaching of 'the cinema' at the secondary level as one of a number of modernisations/remedies in the face of a still mounting ideological crisis in this sector of the educational apparatus. A consequence of this innovation by the universities has been the growing number of books on the cinema brought out by publishers to supply the growing number of students in this field with textbooks, synopses, outlines, surveys of the subject, introductions, theses, etc.

   To cite a few random examples: *Clefs pour le Cinéma,* Barthélémey Amengual (Seghers, whose 'Cinéma d'aujourd'hui' series continues to expand): *L'Ecran de la Mémoire* (Seuil) and *De la Littérature au Cinéma* (Armand Collin, U2 series), by Marie-Claire Wuillemier-Ropars; *Le Cinéma est Mort,* Gérard Lenne (Cerf, in the '7e Art' series which is undergoing a quantitative increase); a number of publications put out by Editions du Signe, established in 1971 and directed by Geneviève and Henri Agel: *Le Cinéma Expressioniste Allemand* by Michael Henry; *Cinéma de Mort; Esquisse d'un Baroque Cinématographique* by Pierre Pitiot; *Le Mot et l'Image* by Jean Mitry; *Polysémie du Cinéma* by Henri Agel; while Editions Champs Libre are digging up the famous dead: Bazin's *Renoir,* Sadoul's *Vertov, La Correspondance de Groucho Marx;* in Denoël's '*le point de la question*' series – *L'Image dans la Société Contemporaine,* by Anne-Marie Thibault Laulan; Buchet-Chastel has hastily published some Eisenstein texts under the title *Ma Conception du Cinéma;* and we mustn't forget Jean Patrick Lebel's *Cinéma et Idéologie,* published by Editions Sociales. The majority of these titles require no comment from us, being simply a repetition of information produced a long time ago. They are directed towards a consumption of facts and subjective impressions in the field of cinema, and do not for a single instance consider challenging that demand. While (at least in recent years) they do not

generally seek, like the last author, to distort, misrepresent and censor the research done at quite a different theoretical, ideological and political level, they either simply ignore it altogether, or, in most cases, exploit its fall-out. It is not surprising therefore if our only connection with them takes the form of a *feuilleton*, since each new delivery is the predictable follow-up in a story which we are beginning to know quite well: the alternately reactionary, modernist, liberal and revisionist episodes in the life of the dominant ideology.

2. See the critique of this work in *Cinéthique* nos 9/10 and 11/12.
3. Why Metz inscribes ideology into the Althusserian ideology/science opposition will become clear later. What is clear already is that the scientific notation is insisted on most emphatically at those points where his work seems to be open to the accusation of partiality – seen as an ideological trait.
4. This is the *final* sentence in a well-known article by Metz published in *Communications* no 64: '*Cinéma, langue ou langage?*', and is reproduced in his first book *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma*. A reading of this work was published in *Cinéthique* no 7/8, see Michel Cegarra, *Cinema and Semiology*, translated in this issue of *Screen*.
5. A sentence which appears on the *last* page of *Langage et Cinéma*.
6. This conflict within the organs of the Partie Communiste Française between (a largely dominant) subjective idealism and objective idealism (dominated, but growing in strength in the last few years) is the background against which Michel Marie's article 'Sur un ouvrage de Christian Metz' (published in *la Nouvelle Critique* no 50) has to be read: (cf *Cinéthique* no 11/12: 'Les politiques artistiques dans le marxisme-leninisme'). It takes the form of an attempt to assert, via borrowings from semiology, the serious and convincing critical discourse which Lebel's pitiful ventures into the field of theory failed to produce (resulting instead in a rare mixed bag of outdated subjective notions like creative responsibility and objective idealist innovations which largely drew on structuralism). If produced, such a discourse would serve to consolidate the interests of revisionism.

   Michel Marie is not likely to fail: within the framework of the objective idealist project to attack the dominance of subjective idealism and 'invalidate all empirical and impressionist criticism' he manages to produce an article on film language and the cinematic sign without once referring to the ideological struggle.
7. Film directed by Jean Daniel Pollet, 1964.
8. *Tel Quel* is a journal of science/literature set up in 1960. It's programme is the founding of a scientific theory of text-production linked to the active transformation of the bourgeois ideology through the writing practice of the collaborators. The most important scientists/writers working in the group are Philippe Sollers, Marcelin Pleynet, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Louis Baudry, Jean Ricardou, Pierre Rottenberg, Jean-Joseph Goux, Jacqueline Risset, etc. One could say that the practice of *Tel Quel* is founded on the texts of J. Derrida, R. Barthes and M. Foucault, while consciously trying to think the relations between their texts and the overdetermining discourses of the sciences founded by Marx and Freud (and inscribing these relations in their textual practice.) **Editorial note.**
9. The graphic sign denotes a signifying unit of the linguistic order. One should use the term *morphemography* instead of the confusing terms ideography and ideogram: the graphic signs never directly denote 'ideas' (for that would be mythography);

they denote morphemes or, as in Classic Chinese where the two coincide, words. (*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique des Sciences du Langage*, Paris 1972, p 251). **Editorial note.**

10. The following observation from Julia Kristeva takes its place in this 'endless' series: 'more specifically, the screen offers the camera the possibility of producing a spatial and dynamic inscription, like a mobile hieroglyphic in the process of formation' (in *Cinéthique*, no 9/10).
11. This formula formed part of an attempt towards a – mechanical – application of the works of Althusser. Its traces can be read in the extracts from the script of *Le Gai Savoir (Cahiers du Cinema* no 200) and in the extracts from the dialogue of *British Sounds* (*Cinéthique* no 5).
12. Throughout the book wide use is made of the notion *material of expression* (or material of the signifier), borrowed from Louis Hjelmslev:

    > The material of the signifier, as the name indicates is the material nature (ie physical, sensorial nature) of the signifier, or more accurately the 'tissue' out of which the signifiers are sectioned (the term 'signifier' being reserved for the signifying *form*) (p 157).

    Metz bases his use of the Danish linguist's terms on the following thesis: 'Contrary to a persistent vulgarisation, the essential opposition in Hjelmslev's thought would be between form and matter, and not form and substance'. Defining these terms more closely: Form is purely 'a network of relationships'; substance is 'what emerges when form is imposed on a material', and is not therefore a third instance. It would be preferable therefore to oppose 'only the two logically primary instances, form and matter' (p 159). Hjelmslev also opposes expression and content. This gives us four terms: the material of expression defined as above; the form of the expression which is the pertinent units of the signifier; the material of the content, which is 'what is called sense (the fact of meaning itself – the semantic tissue); and the form of the content, which is "the pertinent units of the signified".' [See also Stephen Heath, *Metz's Semiology – A Short Glossary*, page 221. **Editorial note.**]
13. 'In relation to the code, each sub-code constitutes a sub-group in two senses: because it concerns a lesser number of films, and because the organisation and value it confers on the resources of the code are not the only ones allowed by that code' (p 103). Montage can therefore be said to be a code, while the different methods of montage are so many sub-codes. Metz makes a second observation that 'the ideal sum of the sub codes (not that of codes) – the action of their concurrence and successive manifestations – is the history of the cinema; at least of what is truly cinematic, for the term is often applied to the history of films (which is simply an abuse of language)' (p 107).

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Translated by Diana Matias

Metz's Semiology: A Short Glossary*

Stephen Heath

This Glossary deals with some of the main terms introduced or developed by Metz in the argument for a semiology concerned with the study of cinematic language set out in *Langage et Cinéma*, this book thus providing the basis for the explanations given here. Terms that are treated simply and at length elsewhere in this issue of *Screen* are omitted. Though its entries are, inevitably, neither exhaustive nor comprehensive, the Glossary might be read as a repertoire of some of the key emphases and propositions of Metz's theory.

NB – Wherever appropriate, direct reference is made to Metz's own formulations, *Langage et Cinéma* being abbreviated as LC. An asterisk placed after a word or phrase refers the reader to the entry given for it in the Glossary and indicates the necessity for understanding it according to the definition it there receives.

CINEMA, CINEMATIC *(cinéma, cinématographique):* The term 'cinema' may be used to resume the various aspects (technological, economic, sociological) of the vast complex within which films are produced and consumed; 'cinematic' will then refer not merely to films but also, for example, to the modes of financing and distributing films. Thus defined, cinema is outside the scope of semiology, which represents an attention to the filmic aspect of cinema. In *Langage et Cinéma*, however, Metz, while accepting the validity of this definition of cinema, is concerned to establish within the framework of his semiology a further and more limited use of the term, a use in which 'cinema' no longer encompasses the filmic but circumscribes within the filmic certain cinematic facts, those that may be shown by semiological analysis to depend on codes specific to cinema. Metz is able, therefore, to talk equally of 'non-filmic cinematic elements' (this from the standpoint of the general definition of 'cinema') and 'non-cinematic filmic elements' (this according to the second, limited definition and referring to elements that are not specific to films).

This second – and crucial – use of the term 'cinema' defines the object of Metz's semiology, the task of which is precisely the elucidation of the 'cinematic-filmic', the construction of a series of *specific* codes. 'Cinematic' thus refers to elements grasped in terms of their position in a coherent system of a generality that covers films or a class of films (their position, that is, in a *code*) and in terms of the disengagement of that system as particular to the mode of expression of film. From this perspective, cinema is regarded as a set of specific codes and plays something of the rôle of *langue* in Saussure's *langue/parole* model; cinema is the abstrac-

* Discussion of some of the issues raised by entries in this Glossary may be found in Stephen Heath, *The Work of Christian Metz*, BFI Education Advisory Service/SEFT paper, March 1973.

tion (system of possibilities) constructed by semiology which renders account of the production of individual films. This model is adapted in Metz to the terms of a reflection on the cinematic language* which gives the possibility of filmic writing*.

CINEMATIC CODES, CINEMATIC SUB-CODES *(codes cinématographiques, sous-codes cinématographiques):* The distinction between cinematic codes and sub-codes is initially made in *Langage et Cinéma* as that between general and particular cinematic codes. General cinematic codes are those systematic constructions which organise elements that are not simply specific to films but which are effectively or potentially common to all films; thus, for instance, the general code of cinematic punctuation. Particular cinematic codes are those systematic constructions which organise elements that, while specific to films (this is the justification for the term 'cinematic'), only appear in certain classes of films (this being their particularity); thus the particular codes of punctuation peculiar to certain schools or genres of films (the terms 'school' and 'genre' are not exhaustive of the different sets over which a particular code may be operative).

The example of punctuation suggests the reason for the movement to the formulation in terms of cinematic codes and sub-codes. The relation between general and particular is that between code and sub-code; the particular code determines a certain value for its elements which is only one of those permitted by the general code. Such a relation might be thought of as analogous to that between the various sub-codes of a natural language and the general code of *langue* which gives the possibility of their realisation. This analogy is seen by Metz, however, as needing an important qualification: in language the general code has a high degree of stability and coherence that is definable with precision outside of reference to the various sub-codes; in cinema the relative strengths of codes and sub-codes can often be seen to lie in favour of the latter, a cinematic code being rather a problem of coding, the virtual position, as it were, of a diversity of possible or future codifications. 'At the extreme, and by perhaps forcing things a little, one might conceive of a certain type of code which, outside of any positive stipulation, would be defined solely as the *position common to several sub-codes*, as a *calculus* (in the logical sense of the term) of possible codifications, as the area without which it would be impossible to understand that these sub-codes bear on the same point of the cinematic process and are held in mutual relations of competition.' (LC, 105). The context of the conception of this type of code is Metz's identification of a number of important general cinematic codes as systems of *signifiants* without *signifiés;* an element such as the dissolve, though evidently cinematic and definable as an element in terms of a code in the relations of commutation it sustains with a series of other elements, acquires a

 precise value only in a particular sub-code.

Cinema is defined by Metz in terms of a plurality of codes and it is important not to confuse codes and sub-codes. Codes are not in competition with one another since they do not intervene at the same point of the cinematic process; there is no choice between, say, lighting and montage. Choice is given between the various sub-codes of a code, they being in a relation of mutual exclusion; there is no possibility of choosing at one and the same time the montage developed in Russian films of the twenties and that associated with the theories of Bazin. Codes and sub-codes of different codes are in a (syntagmatic) relation of addition and combination: sub-codes of the same code are in a (paradigmatic) relation of substitution.

CINEMATIC LANGUAGE *(langage cinématographique):* The analysis of cinematic language is the principal object of Metz's semiology (the other major area of a semiological approach to film being the analysis of filmic writing*). Metz defines cinematic language as the totality of cinematic codes and sub-codes* in so far as the differences separating these various codes are provisionally set aside so that they may be treated as one unitary system (LC, 51, 98). It might be possible, therefore, to conceive of this language as the master structure of a multiplicity of structures (LC, 187), but such a conception tends to reintroduce a notion that Metz is constantly seeking to combat, that of there being one unique cinematic code (LC, 29, 50-51, etc). The advantage of the term ' cinematic language ' lies simply in the possibility it allows at certain levels of the analysis of thinking of the various cinematic codes in one block together (the possibility of what Metz calls a ' general neutralisation ') in order to arrive at propositions of the type ' There is nothing in cinematic language that corresponds to the word in linguistic language '.

The choice of the term ' language ' (*langage*) and the insistence on a plurality of cinematic codes are crucial. For Metz, it is not possible for semiology to determine for cinema a construction equivalent to the constructions determined in linguistics for natural languages of the kind of Saussurean *langue* or Chomskyean *competence*, abstractions that englobe the range of manifestations of a language (instances of *parole* or level of *performance*) in terms of models that account for the process of signification, the linking of semantic and phonological components, via sign and system (structure) in Saussure, via syntactic structure in Chomsky. The use by Metz of the term ' language ' (*langage*) is a response to the lack of this kind of general coherence in cinema: ' this language has neither the same cohesion nor the same precision as a *langue* (moreover, it still has to be established) ' (LC, 111); ' cinematic language is different – rather than " distinct " – from what a *langue* would be, but it serves instead of it (for here no *langue* exists) '

(LC, 202). At the same time, ' language ' lays stress on the existence of a plurality of codes; contrary to *langue* (' le code de la langue ', Saussure), language is not a single code but the combination of several codes: ' just as one single code can be manifested in several languages, so a single language can manifest several codes, certain of these being not specific to that language. The non-coincidence between codes (homogeneous systematic unities) and languages (homogeneous physical unities) is a very widespread phenomenon. . . . ' (LC, 25). Thus in natural language, the general code of *langue* or competence is manifested along with a range of other codes (of politeness, familiarity, narrative, literature, etc) some of which are specific to this language (eg literature) while others move across various languages (eg politeness). Metz emphasises the ' *heterogeneity of codes* that is characteristic of all " languages " of some importance ' (LC, 25) and consequently, cinema being precisely a language of some importance, the ' pluricodic character of cinema ', ' the heterogeneity of cinematic language ' (LC, 143). Analysis has, therefore, to deal with cinema as a specific configuration of codes, as work of structuration, as particular combination of codes; in so doing, it seeks to determine those codes that are specific to cinema, that are *cinematic**, (' each language is specific not only by the combination of its codes, but also by certain of the codes that participate in that combination ' LC, 187). Metz describes this configuration for cinema in terms of a number of circles: ' the specificity of cinema – if, as is the general argument of this book, it be defined in terms of codes – is a phenomenon of great internal complexity which is ordered, so to speak, according to a certain number of *circles*, concentric or secant; each circle marks off what in set theory is called a class; a group of codes and at the same time a group of languages: the set of languages to which this group of codes is exclusively attached ' (LC, 171). (See *Cinéthique* on *Langage et Cinéma*, p 196.)

These general remarks may be complemented by the following points which indicate certain difficulties that crucially engage Metz's semiology. (1) It was suggested that the term ' cinematic language ' is used to block together the various cinematic codes in a way which, while avoiding the notion of a single ' organic ' cinematic code or *langue*, allows, nevertheless, certain general propositions to be formulated concerning the nature of signification in cinema; it is thus that cinematic language, in Metz's phrase, serves instead of *langue* and it is thus too that cinematic language is a construction of analysis, like the codes that it brings together (LC, 59). Yet at times the term ' (cinematic) language ' seems to be placed in a somewhat different context of definition, that given in the characterisation of a language in terms – borrowed from Hjelmslev – of its matter of expression; a characterisation which places cinematic language not on the side of semiological analysis but on that of initial perception. Metz provides a particularly clear

instance of such a characterisation (formulated in a way which resembles formulations attacked with some irony by Metz himself at the beginning of *Langage et Cinéma*, 17ff) in the course of an interview with Raymond Bellour:

> It seems to me that one may call ' language ' a unity that is defined in terms of matter of expression (a Hjelmslevian notion) or of ' typical sign ' as Barthes puts it in *Elements of Semiology*. Literary language is the set of messages whose matter of expression is writing; cinematic language is the set of messages which are identical in their matter of expression, this being here fivefold: moving photographic image, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, writing (credits, inter-titles, etc). Thus ' language ' is a technico-sensorial unity, immediately graspable in perceptual experience. . . . (Raymond Bellour, *Le Livre des Autres*, Paris, 1971, p 276.)

(Compare in passages quoted earlier in this entry the notion of ' homogeneous physical unity ' and the remark concerning the set of languages in cinema). (2) The specificity of cinema, cinematic language, may be defined in terms of a combination of codes but this definition will involve simultaneously for Metz the disengagement of those codes specific to cinema (cinematic codes). The specificity of those codes will derive from the particular nature of the language; in other words, their formal characteristics will be linked to characteristics, certain pertinent traits, of the matter of expression. It is here that the problematic set up by the movement mentioned in (1) from cinematic language as set of codes to the definition of that language in terms of matter of expression is to be understood: ' the position that is here adopted contains two stages, not one only: (1) the specificity with which semiology is concerned is that of codes, not the " brute " specificity of physical *signifiants;* (2) the specificity of specific codes is nevertheless connected to certain traits of the matter of expression ' (LC, 165).

CODE *(code):* The term ' code ' (in the operation code/message) is used by Metz to refer to the formal machines constructed in analysis in order to render account of a particular area of (the process of) signification in a set of messages. As such, a code is distinguished by its coherence, its homogeneity, its systematicity, in the face of the heterogeneity of the message, articulated across several codes. (In the field with which Metz is concerned this distinction can be made as that between film and cinema: ' *film* is on the side of the message (and thus of the heterogeneous), *cinema* is on that of the specific and the homogeneous (thus of the code) ' (LC, 44). ' If a code is *a* code, it is because it offers a unitary area of commutations, that is, a (reconstructed) " sector " within which variation of the *signifiant* correspond to variations of the *signifié*, within which a certain number of units acquire their

meaning in their relations with one another ' (LC, 20). In fact, such a definition, tending as it does to suggest the coherence of a *langue*, may be too strong, for one of the major problems confronted by Metz's semiology is that of the difficulty of utilising the idea of *langue* in cinema, a difficulty crystallised in the recognition of certain cinematic codes as systems of *signifiants* without *signifiés*. In this context the essence of the notion of ' code ' lies less on the process of signification, the relation of *signifiant* and *signifié*, than on its definition of a system of constraints or, to put it another way, of a system of possibilities, of choices, the system bearing equally on paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations (the two being constantly interdependent in the course of the analysis). ' What is called a code is a logical entity constructed in order to explain and elucidate the functioning of paradigmatic relations in the texts and to explain and elucidate the functioning of syntagmatic relations in these same texts. The code carries in it the intelligibility of the syntagm as well as that of the paradigm, without itself being either paradigm or syntagm ' (LC, 122).

In relation to this conception of code, the following propositions need to be noted for their importance in the theoretical framework of Metz's semiology. (1) A code is never exhausted in a single film (as *langue* is never exhausted in any particular instance of *parole*); a code has by definition a (certain) generality. Thus, while every code is a system, not every system is a code. This is Metz's contrast between code and the textual or singular system* of a film, an organisation that is not a code, though it is realised across a series of codes. (2) Just as a language may manifest several codes, so a code may be manifested in several languages; thus, for example, codes of politeness which reappear over a range of languages. (3) The notion of specificity in Metz's writings is crucially connected with the notion of codes, specificity being defined in terms of a particular combination of codes and/or in terms of certain codes that are only manifested in a particular language. (4) A more specific code is not necessarily of greater importance than a less specific code in a given language. (5) The combination of codes in a language can itself be grasped as a code, as a ' system of intercodic relations ': this system provides the very model of the specificity of a language (defined with regard to its combination of codes) and Metz gives an outline of such a model for cinema in terms of an imbrication of circles of codes (LC, 169-176).

CODES OF EXPRESSION/CODES OF CONTENT *(codes de l'expression/codes du contenu):* The distinction between codes of expression and codes of content is introduced by Metz in relation to the problem of the specificity of cinematic language. If that specificity is defined solely with regard to the particular combination of codes, analysis fails to deal with the fact that some codes are felt to be more specific than others and it is to avoid this failure that

that distinction is used. In a given language there may be distinguished codes of expression and codes of content (these codes not ceasing to involve a system of signification, a system of *signifiants* and *signifiés*, though the latter may in cinema be unstable), it thus being possible for a particular code to find itself, in relation to the overall text of a language, unilaterally on the side of content or of expression. (It should be noted that the distinction between codes of expression and codes of content is *not* – as, indeed, is clearly indicated by the notion of code – the traditional distinction between form and content; for discussion of this see Metz's ' Propositions Méthodologiques pour l'Analyse du Film ', in *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma, Vol. II;* translation given in this issue of *Screen*). In order to exemplify a code of expression Metz refers to the signifying unit represented by alternating montage: within the code in which it finds its reality as signifying unit (in fact, the code of the '*grande syntagmatique*') it carries at once a *signifiant* (the pattern of alternating images) and a *signifié* (the indication of a simultaneity between the corresponding actions); within the film as a whole it remains entirely on the side of expression, such a unit of montage being chosen to recount such and such an episode. Codes of content are characterised by Metz as being semantic codes potentially capable of manifestation in any language and thus having no pertinent relation with any particular matter of expression, being entirely on the side of content in a given language; an example given by Metz is that of codes of narrativity. (For a semiology directed towards the study of codes of this latter order, reference should be made to the work of A J Greimas; cf *Du Sens,* Paris, 1970.)

Remarks: (1) This distinction is not intended by Metz to imply a rigid separation of these two orders of codes in the film-text; on the contrary, he attempts to describe their mutually defining interaction at the level of the work of displacement operated in the filmic writing.* (2) The characterisation of codes of content in the terms given above raises a number of problems. Following Hjelmslev, Metz distinguishes specialised and non-specialised languages; the former, as, for example, the system of road signs, have a limited sector of sense, the latter, as, most evidently, natural language, have a matter of content that is co-extensive with the totality of the semantic tissue. Cinema is a non-specialised language, yet certain codes of content, despite their characterisation as of potentially universal manifestation, seem not, in fact, susceptible to manifestation in cinematic language, this not, however, being the result of a clearly defined specialisation. This implies a further problem of specificity that could, in its development, have repercussions on the very use of the codes of expression/codes of content distinction to deal with the question of specificity. The whole question in these terms, moreover, is present in certain radical instances of contemporary cinematic practice

(Groupe Dziga-Vertov, films of Godard-Gorin). Discussions of the shift operated by such a practice is to be found in the text on *Langage et Cinéma* published in *Cinéthique* 13-14 and included in this issue of *Screen*.

FILM, FILMIC. *(film, filmique):* The film is a given unit of discourse (a message). It may be defined as a ' concrete ' object in so far as it is pre-existent to the work of semiological analysis (films are the material on which that analysis works). In this way film and filmic are in opposition to cinema and cinematic,* the cinematic being the object that the analysis seeks to establish. All the elements appearing in films are thus filmic, but only certain of those elements are cinematic, though this latter is only graspable (the work of analysis) in filmic realisations: ' To this extent, the opposition between film and cinema is that between a real and an ideal object, like that between utterance and *langue* ' (LC, 17). ' The film . . . is the place where extra-cinematic elements are *filmicised:* integrated in the system of a particular filmic discourse. It is also – it is equally – the place where *cinematic* elements are similarly filmicised (the definition of this term remaining the same).' (LC, 87).

The definition of film in these terms does not, however, relegate it to some realm of the ' natural ': ' the deep unity of a film, as of every social phenomenon, is in the end a network of a systematic kind and the semiology of filmic facts . . . must interest itself in particular films as much as in cinema ' (LC, 16). Such a semiology, in other words, considering films as singular totalities, will need to disengage the structuration of those totalities, produce the system of the particular film by bringing out the configuration it realises in its activity as filmic writing:* ' Every film has its particular structure, which is an overall organisation, a network in which everything holds together, in short a system; but this system is valid only for the one film; it is a configuration resulting from various choices, as from a certain combination of the elements chosen '. (LC, 46). It can be seen that the analysis of the system of a film (textual or singular system*) is not for Metz the determination – the attempt at determination – of a single code but an attention to the system of organisation – integration or disintegration, repetition or displacement – of the various codes by which the film is crossed and on which it is realised.

FILMIC WRITING *(écriture filmique):* Filmic writing refers to the activity by which the film working with and against the various codes constitutes itself as *text*, as *film*. By contrast to cinematic language,* filmic writing is not itself a set of codes but an operation, a process – the production of the particular configuration, with its particular system, that is the individual film. This operation is often described by Metz as that of a *displacement:* ' the system of the text is the instance which *displaces* the codes, deforming

 each of them through the presence of the others, contaminating the ones by the others, replacing in the process one code by another and in the end – as the provisionally " fixed " result of this general displacement – *placing* each code in a determined position in the overall structure . . .' (LC, 77-78). Filmic writing thus includes what in film aesthetics is traditionally called ' composition ', but it does so in stressing the film's production in relation to a set of codes and hence in stressing the film as signifying practice in a way which breaks with prevalent notions of ' inspiration ', ' spontaneity ', etc: ' If the film is " invention " or " creation ", it is so solely in so far as it is *operation*, as it adds something to pre-existing codes, as it brings with it structural configurations not anticipated by any one of them ' (LC, 78).

The concept of filmic writing as displacement provides a way of formulating a radical practice of cinema in terms of *deconstruction* and *writing* in the strong, theoretically reflexive, sense that that term finds in contemporary French theory, at the same time that it indicates the necessity for the analysis of those configurations fixed in ideology that the bulk of films repeat with a minimum of ' displacement ', the necessity, in other words, for the analysis in cinema of writings in the sense given that term by Barthes in *Le Degré Zéro de l'Ecriture* (*Writing Degree Zero*) (cf Metz's discussion of this point; LC, 201-204). It is in this latter perspective that the whole problem of ' realism ' could be critically posed (cf *Screen* v 13 n 1, Spring 1972).

FORM/MATTER (or PURPORT)/SUBSTANCE (*forme/matière/substance*): *Langage et Cinéma* uses a form/purport/substance model derived from and developed with reference to the work of the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev (see *Essais Linguistiques*, Copenhagen, 1959; *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, Bloomington, 1953). Hjelmslev's work is of some difficulty and Metz's account of the theory it sets out differs at points from accepted interpretations; in what follows, only the main definitions retained by Metz are mentioned.

Hjelmslev's model distinguishes the manifestation of a language in relation to the three levels of form, purport and substance: form is the pure network of relations defining the set of elements, the tissue of differences; purport (the term ' matter ' used by Hjelmslev in essays published in French may perhaps be clearer and has generally been employed in this Glossary) represents the initially amorphous instance in which form is inscribed and manifested; substance is the result of the inscription of form in purport, the manifestation of form in matter, the configuration thus obtained. According to an image to which Metz refers, substance is what appears when form is projected in matter, as a net projects its shadow on an uninterrupted surface. This model needs then to be brought into play with a further distinction derived from Hjelm-

slev's work, that between expression and content (plane of *signifiants* and plane of *signifiés*), resulting in the identification of six fundamental levels; form of expression, form of content, matter of expression, matter of content, substance of expression, substance of content.

Given this scheme, the semiology of film might be defined as the study of filmic discourse as integrally signifying field, that is, of the form and substance of content, of the form and substance of expression. (cf LC, 13). (It is to be noted, however, that in practice Metz's writings tend to operate with a matter/form distinction, the term 'substance' being replaced by reference to 'material form' 'formed matter'; cf LC, 189-190).

SEMIOLOGY OF FILM *(sémiologie du film)*: The semiology of film will be the study of film as signifying object, as unit of discourse: 'the only principle of pertinence capable of defining at the present time the semiology of film is . . . the will to treat films as *texts*, as units of discourse, thus putting oneself under the obligation to look for the different *systems* (whether or not they be codes) which structure and are implicit in them' (LC, 14). Defined in these terms, such a semiology aims at a mastery of the filmic fact in its totality: 'one can – one must – give as objective to the semiology of film the total study of filmic discourse considered as an integrally signifying area . . .' (LC, 13). A semiology of film presented in this way as aiming at the total study of filmic discourse rejoins necessarily (by virtue of the heterogeneity of codes on which that discourse is realised) the semiological enterprise at the point of its overall ambition as a general science of cultural systems and logics; the semiology of film, in other words, is constantly involved in codes that cross a range of languages (those of narrative for instance) and thus in a reference to other semiologies (just as they may be involved in a reference to film semiology), to, finally, the elaboration of that general science of semiology.

Within the perspective of such an enterprise (and within the perspective of the development of a semiology of film), Metz's work is devoted to the study of *cinematic* codes, of those codes specific to film (thus, in his terms, to a semiology of cinema*): his project is 'to locate certain of the filmic facts and to construct with them the cinematic codes: certain filmic features are *cinematically pertinent*, others are not' (LC, 36). Metz's semiology, therefore, may be defined as the study of cinematic language.* Alongside this limitation of a particular area of concentration, however, Metz continues to refer back to the aim of a total study contained in the notion of a semiology of film, stressing, for example, with regard to that aim, the need to undertake the semiological analysis of films as textual or singular systems,* the analysis of filmic writing.*

With these precisions in mind, it may be useful here to give

Metz's summary midway through *Langage et Cinéma* of the idea of a semiology of film in relation to three crucial points of emphasis:

> the semiology of the filmic fact must have *permanently* at its disposal three notions between which it is able to move rapidly and at every moment... they are:
>
> 1. that of filmic texts, which can present different degrees of material amplitude, the privileged degree being the single complete film (= notion of ' film ' in its enumerative sense).
> 2. that of textual filmic systems, that is, the filmic systems which correspond to these different texts.
> 3. that of non-textual filmic systems (= codes), which themselves present various degrees of generality (= distinction between codes and sub-codes) and which may be, according to the particular case, either cinematic or extra-cinematic; those of them which are cinematic constitute, taken as a whole, the 'cinematic language '.
>
> The particular task of the semiology of the filmic fact could thus be summarised in the following manner: the analysis of filmic texts in order to disengage either textual systems or cinematic codes or sub-codes. (LC, 112).

This account may be completed by the addition of two brief remarks. Firstly, the activity of the semiologist is the construction of systems and codes; in this, his procedure is the inverse of that of the cineaste, who aims at constructing a text, and parallel to that of the spectator, who aims at an understanding, a reading. Where the reading of the latter is ' immediate ' (cultural), however, that of the semiologist is produced as analytical, an understanding of how the film is understood, of how it signifies, of its system(s) of intelligibility. Secondly, semiology is characterised by Metz as being solely *descriptive*, as being not in any way *normative;* a characterisation derived from the use of the opposition science/ideology in a way that refers to certain Althusserian formulations. [For discussion, see the *Cinéthique* paper on *Langage et Cinéma* translated in this issue of *Screen.*]

SPECIFICITY *(spécificité):* The specificity of a language may be immediately defined in terms of its matter of expression. In the case of cinema, this has five components: moving photographic image, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, writing (eg titles, inserts, etc). Such definition of a language represents the direct apprehension of it as technico-sensorial unity but remains unoperative with regard to the identification of its structural specificity. A semiology, attentive by definition to the process of signification and thus, in Hjelmslevian terminology, to the form and substance of content and the form and substance of expression, recasts the problem of specificity in a study of the set of codes employed in the language. In the perspective of such a

study the specificity of the language may be grasped as its particular combination of codes. This way of thinking specificity is extended by Metz through what amounts to a return to the consideration of the defining possibility of matter of expression: certain codes depend on particular traits of the matter of expression and are specific to a language having that matter. Thus for Metz a language is specific not only by its combination of codes but also by certain of the codes it combines. The disengagement with regard to filmic discourse of these latter codes is the principal task of Metz's semiology; the (re)construction of cinematic language.*

SYSTEM/CODE, TEXT/MESSAGE *(système/code, texte/message):* For purposes of clarification with regard to other entries in this Glossary, it is worth indicating specifically here the terms of the ' play ' between system, code, text and message in the theoretical framework of Metz's semiology. ' System ' and ' code ' are used to refer to ' every underlying logical and symbolic organisation ' (LC, 655), such an organisation determining a set of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations and being ' non-textual ' (LC, 65) in that it represents an abstraction, is a construction elaborated in semiological analysis. The notions of system and code are also, however, crucially distinguished in Metz's thinking. Every code is a system but not vice-versa, hence the conception of the textual or singular system of a particular film; where a code is characterised by a degree of generality (it is valid for a group of texts), a textual system is precisely a *singular* system (valid for the one film-text only). Codes, in other words, are *general* systems and it is the trait of generality that is pertinent in the distinction between code and system with which Metz operates. The distinction between text and message is then a corollary of that between system and code. Every message is a text but not vice-versa, since the film may be treated as a unique text (the realisation of a singular system), while a message is a text that is not unique in manifesting a certain system (this system thus being a general system or code). The ' play ' between these four terms derives from the level of analysis: considered as series of messages the film is taken up in an analysis aiming primarily at the disengagement of the various codes which it manifests; considered as text the film is subject to an analysis seeking to grasp its particular system, to describe its work of displacement, of writing. It goes without saying that the two approaches are interdependant, but their ' separation ' (the concentration on one or the other in analysis) is operationally valid in the context of the work to be done towards the development of a semiology of film. Metz's distinction between the levels of text/system and message/code serves to avoid confusions that continue to hinder that development.

TEXTUAL SYSTEM (SINGULAR SYSTEM) *(système textuel (système*

226 *singulier)):* The term ' textual system ' (initially ' singular system ') is used to refer to the organisation of a film (text) considered as singular totality: ' Every film has its particular structure, which is an overall organisation, a network in which everything holds together, in short a system; but this system is valid only for the one film; it is a configuration resulting from various choices, as from a certain combination of the elements chosen. These choices have been effected amongst the resources offered by various cinematic codes (general or particular) – but equally by non-cinematic codes ' (LC, 46). It may be noted that (1) the textual system is not to be considered as a code; it lacks, as the term ' singular system ' indicates, the generality of a code (a code being a system that is valid for a set of texts which, grasped in analysis from this point of view, become so many *messages*) and describes only the particular organisation of a single film: (2) the study of a textual system (the study of a film as singular totality) is not the study of cinematic specificity, this latter involving the distinction of codes: (3) the textual system, like these codes, is constructed by analysis – an analysis bearing on the study of a singular system seeks to construct the system of the given film or text; text and system are thus in Metz's theory held in a relation of opposition as, respectively, ' attested process and constructed intelligibility ' (LC, 57): (4) the textual system is grasped as the result of an activity of integration-disintegration, of combination, modification, displacement of codes, of filmic writing*; it is this activity that realises the singular system: (5) like codes, the textual system contains a set of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. What is interesting here is the possibility of ' inter-codicity ' exploited by these relations (this is the film's activity of displacement). Where in terms of codes a paradigm or syntagm is established between elements belonging to the one and the same code, in a textual system they ' cross ' codes. In fact, with regard to syntagmatic relations this inter-codicity in textual systems is relatively banal; it is a question simply of the combination within a single sequence or shot of elements deriving from a diversity of codes (montage, lighting, dialogue, etc). With regard to paradigmatic relations, however, it takes on a critical and auto-reflexive character; thus certain films which actualise together various sub-codes of the same code or certain films which construct disruptive relations of substitution between elements from two or more different codes: (6) although the idea of textual system has here – as in *Langage et Cinéma* – been defined in particular relation to the unit of the single film, Metz can allow the idea to operate also in relation to more, or less, extended units; thus, for example, a group of films considered, on the basis of some criterion of resemblance or kinship as a single continuous text (' plurifilmic text ') or a particular sequence of a film taken as a textual unit for which an attempt is made to determine the singular system.

Compiled by Paul Willemen

HENRI AGEL: Born in 1911 in Paris. Ardent Catholic; professor of film at the IDHEC (qv). Associated with the Centrale Catholique du Cinéma, editor of the journal *Etudes Cinématographiques*. Contributor to many film magazines, including *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the fifties. Director of the series of filmbooks *7ième Art* published by Le Cerf. Main publications: *Le Cinéma a-t-il une Ame?* (awarded the Canudo Prize in 1952); *Le Prêtre a l'Ecran* (1953), *Le Cinéma et le Sacré* (1953, revised in 1961), *Esthétique du Cinéma* (1957), *Miroirs de l'Insolite dans le Cinéma Francais* (1958), *Les Grands Cinéastes* (1959), *Du Cinématographe au Septième Art* (1959), *Précis d'Initiation au Cinéma* (coll. with Geneviève Agel) (1961), *Romance Americaine* (1963), *Voyage dans le Cinéma* (coll, with Geneviève Agel) (1962), and studies of Jean Grémillon, R Flaherty, V de Sica, R Bresson, Fellini, Tati, etc.

ALEXANDRE ALEXEIEFF: Born in Kazan (Russia) in 1901. Painter, stage designer and book illustrator. Inventor of the 'pin screen' animation technique (eg the films *Une Nuit sur le Mont Chauve* in 1932, *En Passant* in 1943 and *Le Nez* in 1963). He also made several commercials and publicity films and designed the credit sequence for Orson Welles' *Le Procès* (1962). He called his films 'synthetic films' defining the term as: 'a film in which not only the movement is created, but also the very appearance of the animated beings, controlled at every instant of their metamorphoses'. He was assisted in his work by Claire Parker and Georges Violet.

LOUIS ALTHUSSER: Born in Algeria in 1918. He went to the Ecole Normale Superieure where in 1948 he took his degree in philosophy. Since then he has taught there and is now the *Secrétaire* of the school. During his youth he was active in the Catholic student movement; in 1948 he joined the French Communist Party. He has published many articles in various journals and the following books are available in English (all in New Left Books): *For Marx*, *Reading Capital* and *Lenin and Philosophy*. Althusser has demonstrated that Marx founded the science of social formations, ie of 'the concrete complex whole comprising economic practice, political practice and ideological practice at a certain place and stage of development. In his concern to stress the distinction between science and ideology, Althusser insists that theory constitutes a further practice, theoretical practice, that transforms ideology into knowledge with theory. The determinant moment in each practice is the work of production which brings together raw

materials, men and means of production – *not* the men who perform the work, who cannot therefore claim to be the subjects of the historical process ' (from Ben Brewster's Glossary in *For Marx* and *Reading Capital*).

BARTHELEMY AMENGUAL: Algerian journalist and lecturer. Film critic as well as author of articles on comic strips. Published studies of A Dovzhenko, G W Pabst, René Clair, Eisenstein, Vigo, Pudovkin, the brothers Prévert etc. Also: *Clefs pour le Cinéma* (1971), *Roman et Cinéma* (1951), *Théâtre et Cinéma* (1953) and, together with Mario Verdone, *La FEKS* (1970).

RUDOLF ARNHEIM: Born in 1904 in Germany. Since 1939 he has resided in the United States where he lectured at many universities. At present he is Professor of the Psychology of Art at Harvard. Main publications: *Film als Kunst* (1932) a revised edition of which appeared in English in 1957 under the title, *Film as Art; Art and Visual Perception* (1954); *Towards a Psychology of Art* (1966); *Visual Thinking* (1969); *Entropy and Art* (1971).

ANTONIN ARTAUD: (1896-1948). French poet, actor and dramatist. Born in Marseille. His first role as a film actor was in the silent film *Mater Dolorosa* (1917). He later acted in Gance's *Napoleon* (1927), Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928), Pabst's *Dreigroschenoper* (1931) and many others. He scripted G. Dulac's *La Coquille et le Clergyman* (1927) but later disowned the film. In 1926 Artaud helped found the Théâtre Alfred Jarry, and later his name became synonymous with the theatre of cruelty. His *Oeuvres Complètes* were published in Paris by Gallimard (Vol 3 contains his writings on the cinema), translation published by Calder & Boyars.

BELA BALAZS: (real name: Bela Balogh) (1884-1949). Hungarian critic and aesthetician, as well as poet and novelist, scriptwriter and director. Librettist for Bela Bartok; began a career as film director in Hungary in 1915. After the defeat of the Hungarian revolution in 1919 he was forced to flee to Austria and then to Berlin. From 1933 to 1945 he stayed in the Soviet Union where he taught at the Moscow Art Institute. After the war, he returned to Hungary but continued his teaching activities in Poland and Czechoslovakia. He collaborated on Pabst's *Dreigroschenoper* (1931) and Riefenstahl's *Das blaue Licht* (1932). His main works: *Der Sichtbare Mensch* (1924), *Der Geist des Films* (1925) and *Film: Werden und Wesen einer neuen Kunst* (1949). An English version of his main work appeared in London in 1952 under the title *Theory of Film*.

ROLAND BARTHES: Born in 1915 and studied French literature and Classics at the Université de Paris. In 1936 he founded at the

Sorbonne the Groupe Théâtral Antique. After a long illness, he taught French at universities in Rumania and Egypt. after which he joined the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS). In 1947 Barthes published a number of articles on literary criticism and the nature of writing in *Combat*, a Paris newspaper then run by Maurice Nadeau. Barthes is now *Directeur d'Etudes* in the 6th section of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, where he teaches a course on the sociology of signs, symbols and collective representations (from the biographical note in *Elements of Semiology*, Cape, London, 1967).

ANDRE BAZIN: (1918-1958). French Catholic film critic (a stutter prevented him from taking up a career as a teacher). Co-founder and co-editor of the *Revue du Cinéma* in 1947, later to become the *Cahiers du Cinéma* (1951). Bazin's main essays have been published in *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma* (4 vols) (1958-62) and partially translated into English: *What is Cinema?* (2 vols so far). Bazin defended the ' ontological realism ' of the cinema, championing the long take, deep focus and editing in the frame rather than the fragmentation/construction approach of eg Eisenstein. Bazin also repeatedly warned his colleagues on *Cahiers* not to carry the *politique des auteurs* too far, although he agreed with the basic principles of the *politique*.

RAYMOND BELLOUR: French film critic. His study of the Bodega Bay sequence in Hitchcock's *The Birds* (originally published in *Cahiers du Cinéma*) has become a classic piece of film analysis. An English translation of this article forms part of the British film Institute, Education Department's study unit on Hitchcock (compiled by Phil Hardy). Other works include a study of *Marnie*, Alexandre Astruc and many interviews, collected in his book *Le livre des autres*, Paris, 1971.

EMILE BENVENISTE: French linguist born in 1902. His work has been very influential in France, especially his critique of the dualism inherent in the Saussurian concept of the sign. Benveniste also challenged the Saussurian notion that the connection between an ' acoustic image ' and the concept it conveys was arbitrary and conventional, ie the symbolic aspect of the verbal sign. Publications: *Nature du Signe Linguistique, Acta Linguistica*, Vol 1, 1939, and *Problèmes de Linguistique Générale*, Paris, 1966. Benveniste is now president of the International Association for Semiotic Studies and professor at the Collège de France.

CLAUDE BREMOND: Lecturer at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Centre d'Etudes des Communications de Masse). His principal research interest is structural analysis of narrative. His recent writings have mostly been published in the journal of the

CECMAS: *Communications*. Bremond also collaborated with Gilbert Cohen-Séat (qv) on *Problèmes Actuels du Cinéma et de l'Information Visuelle* (Part 1 and 2) (1959).

OLIVIER BURGELIN: Lecturer at the CECMAS and secretary of *Communications*, to which he contributed a challenging essay on verisimilitude as a cultural system. Burgelin also published many studies of the mass media, eg *La Communication de Masse* (1970).

ERIC BUYSSENS: Belgian linguist. Author of *Les Langages et le Discours* (1943).

RICCIOTTO CANUDO: (1879-1923). Italian film critic, journalist and novelist. Enlisted in the Foreign Legion in 1914 and stayed in France after the war. He was one of the first journalists to write film criticism in the French papers. Co-founder of the first film society in 1924. His novel, *L'Autre Aile* was made into a film, scripted by Canudo and directed by Henri Andreani in 1924. His writings were collected in the book *L'Usine aux Images* (1927).

R. CARNAP: (1891-1970). Born in Germany. Logical positivist. Author of *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928, re-printed in 1961) *Introduction to Symbolic Logic and its Applications* (1958) and *La Syntaxe logique de la langue*. Associated with the Circle of Vienna.

ERNST CASSIRER: (1874-1945) German philosopher. Studied in Berlin, Leipzig, Heidelberg and especially Marburg, where he became a member of the so-called Marburg School. Initally a Neo-Kantian, he developed beyond this to a theory of knowledge based on mathematics and physics. Eventually, recognising the systemic nature of cultural phenomena, Cassirer developed towards a philosophical anthropology. In one of his last essays (1945), he pointed out that the methods and aims of structural linguistics ' are representative of a general tendency of thought in modern scientific research. The emphasis on structure and system can also be found he showed in such fields as biology, psychology and philosophy ' (from C Guillen, *Literature as System*, 1971, p 56). Main publications: *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit* (1906); *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923); *Die Platonische Renaissance in England und die Schule von Cambridge* (1932); *An Essay on Man* (1944) and *Language and Myth* (1946). Cassirer's ideas on aesthetics have reached us also through the writing of Erwin Panovsky (eg *Perspective as a symbolic form*) and Susanne Langer.

JEAN-PIERRE CHARTIER: Born in 1919 in Paris. For many years he was director of Catholic programmes for French television

(ORTF). Editor of the Catholic weekly *Télérama*. He wrote criticism under the pseudonym Jean-Louis Tallenay. He produced G Rouqier's film *Lourdes et ses Miracles* (1955), P Agostini's *Tu es Pierre* (1958) and J Demy's short *Ars* (1960). Published *Derrière l'Ecran* (1950).

GILBERT COHEN-SEAT: Founder of the *Revue Internationale de Filmologie* (1947) and first director of the Institut de Filmologie de l'Université de Paris (1948). He was the first to make a distinction between film and cinema, a distinction taken up and developed by C. Metz. Cohen-Séat also made a short film on ' the universe ' as seen by a three-year-old child, with two different commentaries: one for general release and one for ' specialist audiences '. He also produced some feature films. Main publications: *Essai sur les Principes d'une Philosophie du Cinéma* (1958); *Problèmes du Cinéma et de l'Information Visuelle* (1961) and *L'Action sur l'Homme: Cinéma et Télévision* (1961).

J. R. DEBRIX: Journalist and lecturer. Author of *Les Fondements de l'Art Cinématographique* (1960).

JEAN DEPRUN: Contributor to the *Revue Internationale de Filmologie*, where he published articles on films with a psychoanalytic approach: *Le Cinéma et l'Identification* (no 1, 1947) and *Cinéma et Transfert* (no 2, 1947).

JACQUES DERRIDA: Teaches history of philosophy at the Ecole Normale Superieure (Paris). Main publications: *De la Grammatologie* (1967); *La Voix et le Phénomène* (1967); *L'Ecriture et la Différence* (1967) and *La Dissémination* (1970). Derrida has constructed an elaborate critique of the notion that writing is merely the representation of speech. The concepts he constructed in this process have had a vast influence on all semiological studies in France, eg it decisively altered the thought of R Barthes (qv) Derrida's writing also forms the co(n)text for Kristeva's writing.

MIKEL DUFRENNE: French aesthetician. Director, with E Souriau (qv) of the *Revue d'Esthétique*. Author of *Phénoménologie de l'Experience Esthétique* (1953). Professor at the Université de Paris-Nanterre and director of the *Collection d'Esthétique* published by Klincksieck (the series in which Metz's *Essais* were published).

GERMAINE DULAC: Born Amiens 1882, died Paris 1942. She was among the first in France to consider cinema as a great art, and from 1916 on, she devoted herself entirely to it. With *La Fête Espagnole* (1919) (scenario by her friend Delluc) she became one of the established personalities of the ' impressionist ' school. After *La Morte du Soleil* (1922) she made her masterpiece, *La*

Souriante Madame Boudet (1922), a critique of petit-bourgeois conjugal life. When talking films prevented all independent production, she preferred to devote herself to newsreels. In addition she campaigned to spread and encourage interest in the cinema and she was important, after 1924, in helping to develop the cine-club movement. From 1920 on she published numerous historical writings, was a journalist and militant feminist. (From *Screen* v 13 no 4, p 56).

UMBERTO ECO: Born in 1932 in Alexandria. Degree in philosophy (1951) and professor in aesthetics at the university of Turin (1962-65), Mailand and Sao Paulo. Visiting professor at New York University in 1970. At present vice-president of the Associazione Italiana di Semiotica.

JEAN EPSTEIN: Born Warsaw 1897, died 1953. One of the pioneers of French cinema, as a maker of narrative, fantasy and documentary films and as a writer and film theorist, and he contributed much to the development of film expression and the growth of film as an art.
In the early 1920's he abandoned his medical studies and published a book of poetry. In the 1920's he became a major figure of the French avant-garde with films like *Coeur Fidèle* and *La Chute de la Maison Usher*. He also published a number of books on film theory. In the 1930's Epstein concentrated on *Seascapes*, a series of documentaries, visual poems of the Brittany coastland, which represented a return to realism (From *Screen* v 13 no 4, p 55).

OSCAR FISCHINGER (1900-1967): German film maker. In 1920 he started making films with a wax cutting machine he had patented. Since 1922 he had been experimenting with animation techniques, but his films were only shown for the first time in 1927 in Berlin. In 1936, having completed 12 *Studien* (numbered from 1 to 12) and a few other abstract films, Fischinger went to the United States, where he made, amongst other films, *Allegretto* for MGM: a short animated film in which the abstract patterns moved to the rhythm of jazz music. In 1940 he designed a sequence for Disney's *Fantasia*, but it was not included in the final version of that film. Apart from making many advertising films, Fischinger was also involved in a number of feature films: he was one of the cameramen on Fritz Lang's *Frau im Mond* (1929), he did special effects for Mitchell Leisen's *Big Broadcast of 1937* and he worked on Orson Welles' abortive project *It's All True*. Fischinger's other films include: *Coloratura* (1931), *Komposition in Blau* and *Kreise* (both 1933), *Quadrate* (1934) *Motion Painting No 1* (1949), an animated oil painting on glass which won the first prize at the first Experimental Film Festival in Belgium (1949), *Muntz TV* (1953) and *Oklahoma* (1954). It was Fischinger's abstract films

which prompted Norman McLaren to undertake making abstract films and they also inspired Jordan Belson and many of his colleagues of the West Coast Abstracts.

CHARLES FORD: Born in 1908. Prolific and very Catholic film journalist and historian. Secretary General of the Societé d'Ecrivains de Cinéma et de Télévision. Published a *Bréviaire du Cinéma* (1945), *Le Cinéma au service de la foi* (1953), *Histoire du Western* (1964), *Hollywood Story* (1968). His study of women film directors, *Femmes Cinéastes* lists Shirley Clarke as the only black woman film director. He also published studies on C. B. de Mille, Emil Jannings, Gary Cooper, Georges Méliès, Germaine Dulac, Max Linder and Victor Sjöström. Together with René Jeanne, with whom he co-authored many books, he published a *Histoire Encyclopédique du Cinéma* (5 vols), *Histoire Illustrée du Cinéma* and *Dictionnaire du Cinéma Universel* (1970).

GOTTLOB FREGE: see p 22 of this issue.

JEAN GIRAUDOUX (1882-1944): Came from a petty official's family in rural France (Limoges). Studied in Paris where he obtained a degree in German Philology (1904). For two years he was private tutor to a German prince. In 1906 he became a lecturer at Harvard, but a year later he returned to France and took up journalism. In 1910 he started a career as a diplomat, but this was interrupted by the war. Up to 1928 Giraudoux had been writing novels and stories, but after a meeting with the famous actor Louis Jouvet, he undertook the writing of plays. Giraudoux has been criticised for an overly mannerist style harking back to the French sixteenth century. His main prose works are: *Siegfried et le Limousin* (1922) and *Le Combat avec l'Ange* (1934). For the theatre he wrote an adaptation of his novel, *Siegfried* (1928) and followed this with *Amphitryon 38* (1929) Other plays include *La Guerre de Troye n'aura pas lieu* (1935), *Ondine* (1939), *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (1943) and *La Folle de Chaillot* (1945). In 1941, Giraudoux adapted Balzac's *La Duchesse de Langeais* for the cinema and the film was directed by Jacques de Baroncelli (1942). Giraudoux also wrote the dialogue for Robert Bresson's *Les Anges du Péché* (1943).

HENRI GOUHIER: Professor at the Sorbonne and at the Institut de Filmologie. He contributed articles to the *Revue International de Filmologie* and published studies of the theatre.

ALGIRDAS JULIEN GREIMAS: Born in 1917 in Lithuania. He obtained a doctorate in literature at the Sorbonne in 1949. Professor in Alexandria, Ankara, Istanbul and Poitiers. Now director of studies in general semantics at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Section 6. Main publications: *Sémantique Structurale*

(1966) *Du Sens: Essais Sémiotiques* (1970) and *Pratiques et Langages Gestuels* (special issue of the journal *Langages*) (1967). Greimas analyses the units of content (lexemes) into constant minimal semantic nuclei (semes) and contextual semantic units (sememes). This process enables him to analyse variations in meaning of one ' word '. Greimas also published extremely important works on the semantic structure of myths and many other related subjects.

PIERRE GUIRAUD: Director of the General Linguistics Section of the Université de Nice and professor of French and General Linguistics at Indiana University. He has written many books and essays on linguistics and literature, eg *Essais de Stylistique, La Stylistique, La Versification* and *Le Testament de Villion,* all published in 1970. Guiraud has been described as ' interested in applying both statistical and structural methods to the study of lexicology and stylistics '.

ZELLIG HARRIS: American linguist, born in the Ukraine in 1909. Main publications: *Methods in Structural linguistics* (1951), *Discourse analysis reprints* (1963), *Mathematical structures of language* (1968) and *Papers in structural and transformational linguistics* (1970).

LOUIS HJELMSLEV: 1899-1965. Danish linguist. Hjelmslev started from two basic notions in the work of de Saussure: 1 language (*langue*) is form, not substance, and 2 all language (*langue*) is at the same time expression and content. He introduced the distinctions matter (or purport)/substance/form of the plane of expression and of the plane of content. Hjelmslev also uses the commutation method, in order to define the minimum linguistic units, but instead of adopting the criteria of opposition, he defines these units in terms of their relations in combinations. Following Carnap (qv) Hjelmslev states: 'a scientific statement must always be a statement about relations without involving a knowledge or a description of the relations themselves ' (in *Essais Linguistiques,* p 32). To mark this difference with eg phonology, Hjelmslev called his discipline glossematics. Main works: *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* (1943), *Essais Linguistiques* (1959), *Principes de Grammaire Générale* (1928) and *Language: An Introduction* (1970).

IDHEC (Institut des Hautes Etudes Cinématographiques): Film school founded in 1943 in Paris by Marcel L'Herbier and Louis Galey. The school opened in 1944. The school has special sections for directors, producers, script writers, sound men, cameramen, decor designers, editors and scriptgirls. Training in TV techniques is also provided. Unkind critics would maintain that the only useful function of the IDHEC is to provide critics on the staff with a

regular salary and an extensive library. The library, which is open to the public, is now being moved outside Paris.

ROMAN JAKOBSON: Russian linguist. Born in Moscow in 1896. Studied at the Lazarev Institute for Oriental Languages in Moscow, and he was a prominent member of the Moscow Linguists Circle (first seminar in 1915). In 1920 he emigrated to Czechoslovakia where he was a founder member of the Linguistic Circle of Prague (the Prague School). During World War Two he taught in various places in Scandinavia before going to New York. From 1942 to 1946 he was professor of linguistics in New York, where he met and collaborated with Claude Lèvi-Strauss (qv). Since 1950, he has been lecturing at Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His contributions to linguistics cannot be overrated. Main publications: *Selected Writings* (so far 4 vols), *Essais de Linguistique Générale* (1963) and *Fundamentals of Language* (coll. with M Halle) (1956).

MAURICE JAUBERT (1900-1940): Composer and author of many filmscores. Killed in the second World War. His work for the cinema includes the score for Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite* (1932) and *L'Atalante* (1933), as well as many of René Clair's films.

JULIA KRISTEVA: Born in 1941 in Bulgaria. Since 1966 she has been working in France with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and is also *Secrétaire* of the journal *Semiotica*. Main publications: *Semiotikè. Recherches pour une Sémanalyse* (1969) and *Le Texte du Roman* (1970).

JACQUES LACAN: French psychoanalyst, born in 1901. Founder of the Ecole Freudienne de Paris. Lacan demonstrated that Freud founded a new science: the science of the unconscious. The scientific study of the unconscious is made possible by returning to ' the theory established, fixed and founded firmly in Freud himself ' (Althusser's comment) with the help of structural linguistics, because ' the discourse of the unconscious is structured like a language ' (Lacan). His ' *Ecrits* ' are being translated at present and will be published in the near future.

ALBERT LAFFAY: French lecturer and journalist, contributor to the *Revue du Cinéma, Revue Internationale de Filmologie* and *Temps Modernes*. Author of *Logique du Cinéma* (1964), *Initiation a la Littérature Anglaise* (together with L and H Kerst) and editor of anthologies of Keats and the French writer Alain.

SUSANNE LANGER: Professor of philosophy at Columbia University, New York. Main translator and continuator of the work of Ernst Cassirer (qv). Main publications: *Philosophy in a New Key*

(1942), *Feeling and Form* (1953) and *Philosophical Sketches* (1962).

JEAN LEIRENS: French journalist, author of *Le Cinéma et le Temps* (1954), *Vues sur le Cinéma* (1947) and *Le Cinéma et la Crise de notre Temps* (1960).

ANDRE LEVINSON: Born in St Petersburg in 1887, died in 1953. Journalist and historian of dance and ballet. Author of many books on dance: *La Danse au Théâtre, La Danse Aujourd'hui, Vie de Noverre, La Argentina,* etc. . . .

CLAUDE LEVI-STRAUSS: Born in Belgium in 1908. Since 1959 he has been teaching Social Anthropology at the Collège de France, and since 1950 he has been director of studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. Lèvi-Strauss seems happy with the description Jean Pouillon gave of his work: ' Lèvi-Strauss is certainly not the first nor the only one to have emphasised the structural character of social phenomena, but his originality consists in taking that character seriously and in serenely deriving all the consequences from it ' (quoted in C Lèvi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology,* Penguin Books, 1972).

L'HERBIER: Born Paris 1890. Refined, cultivated, in love with art and research, he contributed to the development of film as an art form and to its means of expression. His *Eldorado* was hailed by Louis Delluc: ' *That's Cinema* ', and which became proverbial. An important member of the French avant-garde, his most important period was between 1918-1928. He later founded the IDHEC whose international prestige has become considerable. (From *Screen* v 13 n 4, p 56).

LEN LYE: He pioneered the technique of inscribing designs directly onto film, which he called ' direct film '. This technique has since been extensively used, particularly by Norman McLaren, who worked with Len Lye in the GPO unit. Lye left England for the USA in 1943 to work for *The March of Time.* He now teaches and makes Tangible Motion Sculptures in New York. (*Screen* v 13 n 2, p 49).

NORMAN McLAREN: Born in Stirling (Scotland) in 1914. Studied interior design at the Glasgow School of Art. In 1933 he founded a film society and made his first attempts to draw on film, after seeing *Rhapsody no 5* by O Fischinger (qv). ' This first effort, *Seven till Five,* was co-directed by Stewart McAlistair. In 1935, John Grierson invited McLaren to join the GPO. That same year he directed five short advertising films for a retail meat store. Continuing his experiments with animation techniques, McLaren

also functions as cameraman on Ivor Montagu's film *Defence of Madrid* (1936). When McLaren finally joins the GPO in 1936, he tries to make more elaborate experiments with the correspondence of sound and visual patterns in documentaries such as *Book Bargain, News for the Navy, Money a Pickle* and *Love on the Wing*, all in 1937. In 1939 he joins the Film Centre in London, where he makes his last publicity films. He leaves for New York, spends some time at the Guggenheim Museum and then starts his major series of abstract sound-animation: *Allegro, Rumba, Dots, Loops*, etc. In 1941, again on the invitation of Grierson, he joins the National Film Board of Canada, where he has remained, producing his best known work: *Hen Hop* (1942), *Hoppity Hop* (1946), *Fiddle de Dee* (1947) etc. In 1949 McLaren worked on a UNESCO education experiment in Peh-Pei (China). Apart from teaching animation techniques, he also supervised the making of films on eye diseases, health and nutrition. In 1950 he returned to Canada. In 1952-53 he did a similar experiment for UNESCO in India. On his return, 1954, he perfected his new pixillation technique, ie the frame by frame animation of human beings, a technique he pioneered in his film *Neighbours* (1952). McLaren has continued his experiments in visual orchestration produced by the National Film Board of Canada up to the present day.

CLAUDE-EDMONDE MAGNY: French literary critic. Her work on the American novel, *L'Art du Roman Américain* (1948) constituted one of the first French studies of the techniques of narration. In this book she also makes detailed comparisons between fictional narration in American novels and the American cinema. Other publications include: *Histoire du Roman Francais depuis 1918* and *Lettre sur le Pouvoir d'Ecrire.*

MARCEL MARTIN: French journalist; contributor to *Les Lettres Francaises* up to the time of its liquidation (1972). One of the main figures on the film magazine *Cinéma* up to *Cinéma 71.* In 1972 he and many of his colleagues from *Cinéma 71* set up a new magazine *Ecran 72* (now *Ecran 73*). Author of *Le Langage Cinématographique* (1955, revised 1962), *Panorama du Cinéma Soviétique* (1960) and many essays and long studies on a large number of directors and individual films.

ANDRE MARTINET: French linguist. Martinet is usually described as a functionalist, ie he continues the phonological studies initiated by the Prague School, especially Trubetzkoy (qv). Main works: *Elements of General Linguistics* (1964), *Functional View of Language* (1962) and *La Linguistique Synchronique; Etudes et Recherches* (1965).

MAURICE MERLEAU-PONTY (1908-1961): French philosopher.

Together with Sartre, Merleau-Ponty is the main exponent of French phenomenology, ie the method of existential philosophy. He not only drew on Husserl's work but also incorporated many ideas from Gestalt-psychology. Main works: *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (1945), *Signes* (1960) and *Sens et Non-sens* (1948).

JEAN MITRY: Born in Soissons (France) in 1907. Studied physics and philosophy. Assistant to Marcel L'Herbier (qv) in 1924; general secretary of the first film society in France (1925-32); co-founder of the Cinémathèque Francaise in 1936 and professor at the IDHEC (qv) since1944. His many publications include studies of Chaplin, Ford, Eisenstein and René Clair, as well as the gigantic works *Filmographie Universelle* (in progress) and *Histoire du Cinéma* (3 volumes so far). His *Esthétique et Psychologie du Cinéma* is discussed in this issue. He made some short films: *Pacific 231* (1949), *Images pour Debussy* (1951), *Symphonie Mécanique* (1955) as well as the features *Aux pays des Grandes Causses* (1952) and *Enigme aux Folies Bergères* (1958).

EDGAR MORIN: Born in 1921 in Paris. Writer, journalist and sociologist. Director of the Centre d'Etudes des Communications de Masse (CECMAS) at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes. He is also a member of the editorial board of the journal *Communications*. Main publications: *Le Cinéma ou l'Homme Imaginaire* (1956), *Les Stars* (1957), *L'Esprit du Temps* (1962), *Introduction a une Politique de l'Homme* and *New Trends in the Study of Mass Communications* (1968). Morin collaborated with Jean Rouche on the film *Chronique d'un Eté* (1961). He was also Professor of Sociology of the Cinema at the Institut de Filmologie and he contributed many essays to the magazine published by that institute.

CHARLES MORRIS: see C S Peirce.

EMMANUEL MOUNIER (1905-1950): Catholic philosopher; founder in 1940 and again in 1944 of the journal *Esprit* (to which Bazin contributed frequently). Mounier was the ' originator of Personalism and the most important intellectual influence on Bazin ' (from P Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 1972, p 125).

JAN MUKAROVSKY: Born in 1891 Czechoslovakian Formalist; one of the leading figures of the Prague Linguistic Circle. For a discussion of his work and a bibliography, see René Wellete, *Discriminations*, Yale, 1970, pp 275-303.

C S PEIRCE: (1839-1914) American logician. Peirce was a contemporary of Saussure; like Saussure his papers were collected and published posthumously, between 1931 and 1935. Peirce was the most original American thinker there has been – so original, as Roman

Jakobson has pointed out – that for a great part of his working life he was unable to obtain a University post. His reputation now rests principally on his more accessible work, principally his teachings on pragmatism. His work on semiology . . . has been sadly neglected. Unfortunately, his most influential disciple, Charles Morris, travestied his position by coupling it with a virulent form of Behaviourism. Severe criticisms of Behaviourism in relation to linguistics and aesthetics have naturally tended to damage Peirce by association with Morris. The main texts which concern us here are his *Speculative Grammar*, the letters to Lady Welby and *Existential Graphs* (subtitled " my chef d'oeuvre " by Peirce) ' (from P Wollen *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 1972, pp 120-122).

ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET: Born in Brest (France) in 1922. Studied in Paris, where he obtained a degree in Agronomical Engineering. He published his first prose work, *Les Gommes* (The Erasers) in 1953. From then on his name has been associated with the *nouveau roman* (as were the names of Marguerite Duras, Claude Simon, Michel Butor, etc). His other writings include: *Le Voyeur* (1955), *La Jalousie* (1957), *Dans le Labyrinthe* (1959), *Instantanés* (1962), *Pour un Nouveau Roman* (1963) and *La Maison de Rendez-Vous* (1965). In 1961 he scripted Alain Resnais' *L'Année dernière a Marienbad*. He directed his first film, *L'Immortelle* in 1963 (also published as a ciné-novel); since then he has made *Trans Europe Express* (1966), *L'Homme qui ment* (1968) and *L'Eden et Après* (1971). Asked to make a film for French television (ORTF), he edited material he had already shot while making his last film and changed the name of the characters as well as the title. The new film was called *N a pris les dés*. There is an excellent study of the films of Robbe-Grillet by Andre Gardies in the series *Cinéma d'aujourd'hui*, published by Seghers, Paris, 1972.

GEORGES SADOUL (1904-1967): French communist film historian and journalist. Associated with the surrealist movement from 1926 to 1932. His monumental *Histoire Générale du Cinéma* (1948-1954) remained unfinished. Although many details in his works are often inaccurate, his work is still the classic history of film to date. He was professor of film history at the IDHEC (qv) and at the Institut de Filmologie, and contributed to most film magazines and a great number of newspapers.

EDWARD SAPIR (1884-1939): Born in Lauenberg, Germany. In 1889 his parents emigrated to America and Sapir was educated, first in Richmond, Virginia and later in New York City. Attended Columbia University, where, under the influence of the anthropologist Franz Boas, he developed an anthropological approach to linguistics. He did field research on the cultures and languages of

the American Indians and taught at the Universities of Pennsylvania, Ottawa, Chicago and Yale. He was president of the American Anthropological Society as well as of the American Linguistic Society. His most important essays have been collected in *Selected Writings by Edward Sapir in Language, Culture and Personality* (1949).

FERDINAND de SAUSSURE: 'After de Saussure's death in 1913, his former pupils at the University of Geneva collected and collated his lecture outlines and their own notes and synthesised these into a systematic presentation, which was published in Geneva in 1915. In the *Course in General Linguistics* Saussure predicted a new science, the science of semiology. Saussure emphasised that signs must be studied from a social viewpoint, that language was a social institution which eluded the individual will. The linguistic system – what might nowadays be called the "code" – pre-existed the individual act of speech, the "message". Study of the system therefore had logical priority' (from P Wollen, *Signs and Meaning in the Cinema*, 1972, pp 116-117).

PIERRE SCHAEFFER: Born in 1910 in Nancy (France). Writer and musicologist. Founder of the experimental radio unit *Studio d'Essai*. Published a book on concrete music: *A la recherche d'une musique concrète*. Contributed essays to the *Revue Internationale de Filmologie*.

PHILIPPE SOLLERS: Editor of *Tel Quel* and often the most vocal and militant spokesman of the *Tel Quel* collective. His main works include *Niveaux Sémantiques d'un Texte Moderne* (1968), *L'Ecriture Fonction de Transformation Sociale* (1968), both in *La Nouvelle Critique; L'Intermédiaire* (1963), *Drame* (1965), *Logiques* (1968), *Nombres* (1968). Sollers is the director of the *Tel Quel* series of books published by Le Seuil, a series which could be considered as the pace setter for all theoretical writing on discourse analysis and text production in France.

ETIENNE SOURIAU: Professor of aesthetics at the Sorbonne; contributor to the *Revue Internationale de Filmologie*, Co-director (with M Dufrenne) of the *Revue d'Esthétique*. Author of *Les 200,000 Situations Dramatiques* (1950), the first systematic study of the structural rules of a genre. This study remains extremely interesting today in spite of some excentricities. Other publications include: *La Correspondance des Arts* (1947) *L'Avenir de l'Esthétique* (1929), *L'Instauration Philosophique* (1939) and *L'Univers Filmique* (1953).

TZVETAN TODOROV: Associated with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique and with the Ecole Pratique des Hautes

Etudes. Editor of a collection of translations from Russian Formalists; author of a detailed structural study of *Les Liaisons Dangereuses: Littérature et Signification* (1967); *Grammaire du Decameron; Poétique de la Prose* (1971), *Introduction a la Littérature Fantastique* (1971), co-author of *Qu'est-ce que le Structuralisme* (1968), co-director with G Genette and H. Cixous of the journal *Poétique* and the series of books of the same name published by Le Seuil in Paris.

PRINCE NICOLAS SERGEYEVITCH TRUBETZKOY (1890-1938): Russian linguist, born in Moscow. One of the founders of the Linguistic Circle of Prague. Pioneer of the discipline of phonology. Became interested in linguistics at the age of 13 and published his first articles on the subject when he was 15. He specialised in the study of Sanskrit and Indo European linguistics. Professor at the University of Rostov and Sofia, then in 1922 Professor of Slavic Studies at the University of Vienna. His main work (unfinished) is *Grundzüge der Phonologie* (1939), translated in English as *Principles of Phonology* (1969) and published by the University of California.

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This reading list is primarily intended to extend the initial list compiled by Peter Wollen and published in his revised edition of *Signs and meaning in the cinema*, Cinema One series, Secker & Warburg/British Film Institute, London, 1972.

Roland Barthes: all his works, especially *Elements of Semiology* and *Mythologies* (both published in English by Cape, London).
Max Bense: *Semiotik: Algemeine Theorie der Zeichen*, Baden-Baden, 1967.
Gianfranco Bettetini: *Cinema: Lingua e Scrittura*, Milan, 1968.
Hartmut Bitomsky: *Die Rõte des Rots von Technicolor*, Darmstadt, 1972.
Noel Burch: *Praxis du Cinéma*, Paris, 1969 (English translation forthcoming).
Renzo Chini: *Il Linguaggio Fotografico*, Torino, 1968.
Umberto Eco: all his works. Some of his work has been translated in *Cinim* no 3 and in *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, no 3. An English translation of his book *La Struttura Assente* is forthcoming and will be published by Mouton, The Hague, under the title: *The Semiotic Threshold*.
Emilio Garroni: *Semiotica ed Estetica*, Bari, 1968 (French translation forthcoming).
A J Greimas, ea (Eds): *Sign: Language:Culture*, Mouton, The Hague, 1970.
Instituto Agostini Gemelli (Ed): *I Problemi dell'Informazione e della Cultura di Massa*, Milan, 1965.
Friedrich Knilli and E Reiss (Eds): *Semiotik des Films*, Munich, 1971.
Julia Kristeva, ea (Eds): *Essays in Semiotics*, Mouton, The Hague, 1971.
Luis Prieto: *Messages et Signaux*, Paris, 1966.
Jean Louis Schefer: *Scénographie d'un tableau*, Paris, 1969.
Viktor Schlovsky: *Schriften zum Film*, Frankfurt/ M, 1966.

Periodicals:

After Image, 12-13 Little Newport Street, London, WC2H 7JJ.
Cahiers du Cinéma, 39 rue Coquillière, Paris 1.
Cinéthique: 2, rue Theophraste Renaudot, Paris 15.
Communications: Les Editions du Seuil, 27, rue Jacob, Paris 6.
Semiotica: Mouton Publishers, PO Box 482, The Hague, 2076.
VS: Via Martignoni 1, 20124 Milan.
Working Papers in Cultural Studies: University of Birmingham, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.

I Books

Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma, Vol 1, Klincksieck, Paris, 1968 (English translation forthcoming).
contents:

I. Approches phénoménologiques du film.
   1. A propos de l'impression de realité au cinéma (1965)
   2. Remarques pour une phénoménologie du narratif (1966)

II. Problèmes de sémiologie du cinéma.
   3 Le cinéma: langue ou langage (1964)
   4. Quelques points de sémiologie du cinéma (1966)
   5. Problèmes de dénotation dans le film de fiction (a re-working of three essays: a–Problèmes de dénotation dans le film de fiction (1966); b–Un problème de sémiologie du cinéma (1967); c–La grande syntagmatique du film narratif (1966).

III. L'Analyse syntagmatique de la bande-images.
   6. Tableau des ' segments autonomes ' du film *Adieu Philippine* de Jacques Rozier (in coll. with Michel Lacoste) (1967).
   7. Etude syntagmatique du film *Adieu Philippine* de Jacques Rozier (in coll. with M. Lacoste) (1967).

IV. Le cinéma ' moderne ': quelques problèmes théoriques.
   8. Le cinéma moderne et la narrativité (1966).
   9. La construction ' en abyme ' dans $8\frac{1}{2}$ de Fellini (1966)
   10. Le dire et le dit au cinéma: vers le déclin d'un Vraisemblable? (1967).

Essais sur la signification au cinéma, Vol 2, Klincksieck, Paris, 1972.
contents:

I. Sur la théorie classique du cinéma. A propos des travaux de Jean Mitry.
   1. Une étape dans la réflexion sur le cinéma (1965)
   2. Problèmes actuels de théorie du cinéma (1967) (translated in this issue of *Screen*, pp 40-87).

II. Sur divers problèmes sémiologiques.
   3. Montage et discours dans le film (1967)
   4. Propositions méthodologiques pour l'analyse du film (1968) (translated in this issue of *Screen*, pp 89-101).
   5. Ponctuations et démarcations dans le film de diégèse (1972)

III. L'Avant et l'après de l'analogie
   6. Images et pédagogie (1970)
   7. Au-delà de l'analogie, l'image (1970).
   8. La connotation, de nouveau (1972)
   9. Trucage et cinéma (1972)

IV. Sémiologie du sémiologue.

* dates given are the dates of the first publication of the individual essays.

10. Raymond Bellour/Christian Metz: Entretien sur la sémiologie du cinéma (1971)
Langage et cinema, Larousse, Paris, 1971.

II. Articles

Langage gestuel, in Grand Larousse Encyclopédique-supplement 1958.
Le cinéma, monde et récit, in *Critique, no* 216, 1965.
Projet de recherche collective sur le langage gestuel, in collaboration with A J Greimas, roneotyped, 1966.
Les sémiotiques ou sémies, in *Communications*, no 7, 1966.
Remarques sur le mot et le chiffre: a propos des conceptions sémiologiques de L. J. Prieto, in *La Linguistique, no* 2, 1967.
Séme, in Grand Larousse Encyclopédique, supplement 1968.
Spécificités des codes et spécificité des langages, in *Semiotica*, Vol 1, no 4, 1969 (re-worked in *Langage et Cinéma*, Chapter 10)
Sémiologie, linguistique, cinéma (entretien), in *Cinéthique*, no 6, 1970.
[Short reply to a questionnaire on structuralism and cinema in *Bianco & Nero*, no 3/4, 1972.]
Sur la spécificité (interview) in *La Nouvelle Critique*, September 1970.

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